

Ideology or business: Meanings of farm animal welfare in the Finnish Association for Organic Farming

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Introduction

Farm animal issues have become increasingly controversial and politicised. A diversity of scandals in the livestock industry, such as BSE, bird flu, salmonella and dioxin crises, have attracted public attention to animal farming issues. The increasingly industrialising livestock industry has been subjected to a growing societal criticism on animal welfare grounds. (E.g. Franklin 1999, 145–174.) Consumer concern for farm animal welfare has increased and consumers tend to view the level of animal welfare in intensive forms of livestock production highly negatively (Kjærnes et al. 2005; Phan-Huy & Fawaz 2003, 122; Verbeke & Viaene 2000, 145–147). Thus, farm animal welfare issues have become increasingly politicised; for instance, animal advocacy movements have expanded, public discussion on farm animal welfare issues has increased, as well as the consumption of alternative livestock products has grown (see e.g. Franklin 1999, 160–172, 175–188). Likewise, farm animal welfare policy has become increasingly powerful, with the introduction of a variety of new kinds of animal welfare regulations and farm animal welfare subsidy schemes (e.g. Miele et al. 2005).

The development of alternative livestock production schemes is a particularly interesting phenomenon in the politicisation of farm animal issues. Although there have been some alternative animal farming systems (e.g. organic farming) for some time now, it is only rather recent that these systems have started including extensive animal welfare claims. Likewise, a diversity of new kinds of “animal friendly” schemes are progressively being introduced into the food market sector, such as free range, outdoor raising and quality-oriented certification systems (e.g. Miele & Evans 2005). It seems that retailers and manufacturers have identified new marketing opportunities in the farm animal welfare field. At the same time, alternative livestock production schemes provide new kinds of opportunities for consumers to influence farm animal welfare issues and to do politics with their consumption choices. In this way, they represent a wider trend of growing ethical consumption: consumption has become increasingly a site for political action, and markets are being progressively more used as a political tool in attempts to change certain institutional and economic practices and to express other-regarding concerns, solidarity and care (comp. Clarke et al. 2007; Micheletti et al. 2006, x–xiv).

Organic farming is perhaps the most significant of these alternative livestock production systems. It is the only “animal friendly” food certification scheme that has a global coverage, with a relatively consistent set of international standards, while other schemes tend to be country-specific. In Finland,

organic farming is the only food labelling scheme that includes extensive animal welfare standards. Likewise, the markets for organic livestock products have expanded in recent years in many countries, including Finland (e.g. Finfood Luomu 2008a; McEachern & McClean 2002, 85; O'Donovan & McCarthy 2002).

Surely, animal welfare concerns are not the sole reason for the increasing popularity of organic and other alternative livestock products; a range of other motives for their consumption exist, such as health, food quality, environmental and social justice reasons (e.g. Franklin 1999, 152, 161; McEachern & McClean 2002, 88; O'Donovan & McCarthy 2002). These schemes are a part of a wider development of “alternative food networks”, such as fair trade, local food, farmers markets, slow food and quality food initiatives, which attempt to reconnect consumers with food production and to counteract a range of problems associated with the conventional, increasingly concentrated and globalised agro-food system (e.g. Mononen 2006, 40–46; Morris & Kirwan 2006, 192–193). In the earlier phases of organic farming the attention tended to focus on health and environmental issues, while animal welfare was regarded as a lesser issue. However, animal welfare is being awarded an increasingly important status within the sector, and nowadays organic farming standards include extensive animal welfare requirements. (E.g. Padel et al. 2004.)

Since organic farming is such a major alternative animal production scheme, it is important to analyse what kind of resolutions it offers to the moral problems associated with the mainstream livestock production system and to assess the meaning of animal welfare in the sector. However, although social scientific research on organic farming has increased, little attention has been given to the meanings of animal welfare in the sector despite its heightened societal importance as an “animal friendly” alternative to mainstream production. We know from previous research that the meaning of animal welfare is not straightforward, but it is a highly contested concept, defined in dissimilar ways by different actors and in different contexts. Concurrently, there is much ambiguity in the diversity of welfare claims suggested in different labelling schemes. (E.g. Fraser et al. 1997; Roe & Higgin 2006.) This raises a question how animal welfare has been constructed in the organic sector.

In recent years, as the organic farming sector has been expanding, commercially oriented actors, such as mainstream food retailers, have entered into the field, previously dominated by ideologically oriented movement actors. Likewise, governments have begun to be increasingly involved in regulating the standards-setting, inspection and certification of organic farming as well as subsidising

organic farmers and supporting research and education activities in organic agriculture. (E.g. Guthman 2004a; Mononen 2008.) The growing involvement of governmental and business actors has created some tensions between ideological orientations and market orientations in the sector. In particular, in the “conventionalisation debate” in organic farming studies, a discussion is underway as to whether the commercialisation and institutionalisation of the sector has caused the original principles of organic farming to be vitiated and whether organic farming is losing its capacity to challenge the conventional food system (e.g. Best 2008; Coombes & Campbell 1998; Guthman 2004b; Hall & Moggyorody 2001). However, the discussion on conventionalisation and market–ideology tensions has tended to focus on organic crop production, while less attention has been given to organic livestock production and particularly to animal welfare issues. This raises a question about the effects of growing governmental and business involvement upon the position of animal welfare in organic farming.

The discussion on conventionalisation and business–ideology tensions has tended to focus on farmers’ attitudes, farming practices and the structure of agro-food industry – typically from the political economy perspective. However, in recent years there has been a growing interest in examining political discourses concerning organic farming and in particular in analysing the construction of the meaning of “organics” in the standards-setting field, which indeed has become the key arena for defining the meaning of organic farming (e.g. Boström & Klintman 2006; Campbell & Liepins 2001). This has also implied that research perspectives in this research field have widened from the political economy approach towards more constructionist and discourse analytic approaches. Studies concerning organic standards, organic farming organisations and certifying agencies have indicated that market-oriented farmers, large retailers and manufacturers as well as governmental players have become increasingly powerful agents in these fields, while movement-oriented farmers have become more and more marginalised (e.g. Boström & Klintman 2006; Campbell & Liepins 2001; Guthman 2004a; Michelsen 2001). Since these studies have tended to focus on the plant side of organic production, there is a need to study how the growing business and governmental involvement in the standards-setting arena may have influenced the discussion on animal welfare standards.

Finland appears to provide an interesting setting to analyse these issues since it belongs to those few countries in which the government has started maintaining organic standards and carrying out inspection and certification. In the most of the EU countries private bodies (such as organic farmers’ organisations or professional certifying agencies) have continued standards-setting, inspection and

certification activities, and the governmental system exists only in Spain, Denmark and Finland. In Finland, prior to the governmental involvement, the *Finnish Association for Organic Farming* (FAOF) (in Finnish *Luomuliitto*) was a central actor in setting organic standards as well as in carrying out inspection and certification and it maintained its hold in the standards-setting activities rather long despite the growing governmental involvement. Hence, I became interested in how FAOF had responded to the growing governmental importance in the standards-setting field. Moreover, FAOF also appeared to provide an interesting context to analyse the tensions between market-oriented and movement-oriented actors in the organic field. FAOF, as an organisation for organic farmers, has needed to respond to the transformations in the organic field and to the increase in more business-oriented farmers in the sector.

Thus, I took FAOF as my case to study how the cultural meanings of animal welfare are constructed in organic farming and to investigate the implications of the growing governmental and business involvement to this meaning construction. FAOF is an important actor in the negotiation of the meaning of organic farming in societal discussion and in policy making field in Finland. It is the only nation-wide organic farming society and represents organic farmers in public discussions.

This research topic reflects my long-term interest in animal ethics issues in livestock production. I have been involved in the animal advocacy movement for some time now, and, most likely, my experiences in this movement have influenced how I have approached this research topic. Similarly, probably the reason why particularly animal farming issues interest me is related to the fact that I was grown up in a dairy farm (which was operated with conventional farming methods). However, although I have been interested in organic farming issues for a long time now and although I favour organic products in my shopping choices, I have not been involved in the organic farming movement or in any organic farming societies.

1.1 Research questions and methods

In this research, I study how the meanings of animal welfare in organic livestock farming are constructed in FAOF (see more specific research questions in section 4.1). I approach this question from the general framework of social constructionism. In this theoretical approach, there is an interest in examining how different cultural meanings are produced, reproduced, transmitted, contested and transformed in social practices (see Arluke & Sanders 1996, 10–18; Burr 2003). I have found discourse analysis as a useful methodological approach for this kind of research

perspective. In discourse analysis there is an interest to investigate how the social reality or certain meanings are produced in the language use (Jokinen et al. 1993b, 9–10). The data consist of 268 Luomulehti articles, FAOF's documents (such as livestock production standards and FAOF's statements), as well as interviews with five FAOF's representatives and activists. I have analysed the data by coding it with NVivo software.

I wanted to look briefly at FAOF's history in order to be able better to analyse the question of the implications of the growing governmental and business involvement in animal welfare discourses. Hence, I analysed data in the period of 2000–2005. The year 2000 was in many ways an important year from this perspective. In this year the government took over the inspection and certification of organic livestock production and differentiated its crop production standards from FAOF's Ladybird standards. Consequently, FAOF's Ladybird certification system faced important challenges and FAOF started redefining its role in the organic sector. All these changes provided a fruitful context to explore the tensions between business, governmental and movement actors in the organic farming sector.

1.2 The structure of the thesis

I start this study by reviewing the literature concerning human – farm animal relations (section 2). I begin with the concept of “farm animal”, describing how humans' relationship to “farm animals” is highly ambivalent: they are considered as sentient beings, but still subjected to human consumption. I also discuss how human – farm animal relations have become increasingly ambiguous as animal farming has been intensifying, but at the same time empathetic attitudes to animals have been growing. Ambiguities in these relations have lead to the politicisation in farm animal issues, and eventually, to the development of alternative livestock production schemes. After this, I review the concept of “animal welfare”, showing how its meaning is highly contested. I argue that there is a need to study how “animal welfare” is constructed in alternative livestock production schemes, particularly in organic farming.

In section 3, I review the place of animal welfare in organic farming. I start by discussing the definitions of “organic livestock production” as it is defined in organic standards. I also examine whether organic farming in fact responds to consumer concerns for animal welfare and brings any improvements to the welfare of animals. After this the place of animal welfare in the historical development of organic farming is discussed, and also the development of the Finnish organic

livestock production sector is described. Finally, the discussion concerning industry–movement tensions and “conventionalisation” in organic farming is reviewed. Overall in this section, I demonstrate that meanings of animal welfare in organic farming have been subjected to relatively little empirical social scientific research. I also show that the discussion on conventionalisation and market–ideology tensions has tended to focus on organic crop production, while less attention has been given to organic livestock production and particularly to animal welfare issues.

In section 4, I introduce more specifically the objectives of this research, based on the previous literature review sections. I also introduce my theoretical and methodological approach – social constructionism and discourse analysis. Moreover, the data used in this study is described.

Section 5 starts the empirical part of this study. I firstly describe which kind of an organisation FAOF is, how the regulation of organic farming has changed in Finland and what this has implied to FAOF’s role and orientation in the organic farming field. After this, in section 6, I examine meanings of animal welfare in FAOF’s discourses. I argue that there are three main discourses on animal welfare in FAOF – an ideological discourse, a market-oriented discourse and an animal welfare business discourse. Moreover, I show that business orientation has increased in FAOF’s discourses, displacing partly ideological argumentation within the organisation. In the concluding section, I summarise my findings and show how the disappearing of ideological argumentation in FAOF’s discourses represents a wider tendency in social movements to lose their ideological, emotive or moral tone when entering to the policy making and business fields.

2 The ambivalent status of farm animals and the politicisation of animal issues

In the last two decades, there has been a growing interest in studying human–animal relations in social sciences, and a new multidisciplinary field of human–animal studies has developed. As a part of this wider research trend, sociological analyses on animal issues have proliferated (see Kupsala & Tuomivaara 2004; Tuomivaara 2004). Undoubtedly, this rising research interest is related to the growing politicisation of animal issues. In Finland, social and cultural animal studies have started

increasing predominantly during this decade, and nowadays this research field has produced a number of dissertations and publications¹.

As a part of this wider academic interest in studying human–animal relations, farm animal issues have also increasingly attracted social scientific attention. As the research field has grown, classical anthropological studies concerning the meanings of meat (Fiddes 1991; Twigg 1983; Vialles 1987/1994) and social historical studies concerning transformations in human – farm animal relations (Ritvo 1987, 125–166; Thomas 1983) have been accompanied with a wide array of other studies, such as studies on vegetarianism (e.g. Maurer 2002; Morris & Kirwan 2006; Smart 2004), consumers’ views about farm animal welfare (e.g. Harper & Makatouni 2002; Miele & Evans 2006; Schröder & McEachern 2004), producers’ understandings of animals (e.g. Convery et al. 2005; Holloway 2001; Wilkie 2005), discursive construction of farm animals in media (Mitchell 2006; Stibbe 2001; Stibbe 2003) and animal protection policies (e.g. Buller & Morris 2003; Miele et al. 2005)². However, in Finland, farm animal issues have so far received little social scientific research attention. A few studies have been carried out for instance on farmers’ attitudes to animal welfare (e.g. Vainio et al. 2007), cultural meanings of native breeds (Partanen 2005), vegetarianism and meat consumption (Vinnari 2008; Vinnari et al. 2008), farm animal welfare regulations (Wahlberg-Pärssinen 2007) and consumer views concerning animal farming (Kupsala et al. 2009), but otherwise society – farm animal relations have not been subjected to an extensive empirical research.

An important theme in the study of human – farm animal relations has been the ambivalent status of farm animals: on the one hand farm animals are regarded as “commodities” and as objects of human consumption, but on the other hand they are treated as “sentient beings” that need to be taken morally into account. Thus, I first review the concept of “farm animal”, discussing how constant cultural work is needed to keep an animal in the category of “farm animals”. After this, I discuss how human – farm animal relations have become increasingly ambivalent: while livestock production has been intensifying, empathetic attitudes to animals have been increasing at the same time. Growing ambiguities in these relations have lead to the politicisation of farm animal issues and created space for the development of alternative livestock production systems, such as organic farming. Finally, since these schemes suggest resolutions to animal welfare problems associated to

¹ A list of Finnish dissertations and other publications in the field of human–animal studies can be found on the Internet site of the *Finnish Society for Human–Animal Studies* (<http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/blogs/elaintutkimus/>).

² I have reviewed the studies concerning consumers’ and producers’ views about farm animals more extensively elsewhere, see Kupsala (2007).

the mainstream livestock production, I review the concept of “animal welfare” in more detail, arguing how its meaning is highly contested in these schemes.

2.1 “Farm animal” as an ambiguous cultural category

Let me start first with the concept of “farm animal”. To begin with straightforward definitions, it simply refers to an animal that is “farmed”, i.e. bred, reared or grown (commercially) for agricultural production (see “farm” in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, in Soanes & Stevenson, eds., 2004). Perhaps a more specific definition is given in Finland’s Animal Protection Decree (Eläinsuojeluasetus 396/1996, 5 §) to the concept of “production animal” (tuotantoeläin), which is a somewhat parallel term to “farm animal” in Finnish language: “an animal that is kept for producing food, wool, leather, feathers or fur as well as an animal that is kept or raised for other agricultural production” (my translation). Hence, the category of farm animal is based on classifying animals according to their function for human utility: it is distinguished for instance from “pets” (companion function), “laboratory animals” (knowledge creation function) or “game animals” (food-producing function, through hunting activities). Thus, any animal that is reared for producing food or other agricultural products can be considered as a “farm animal”: a bee, a rabbit, a fish, an ostrich or a roe deer (that are typically categorised as pets or wild animals) can become “farm animals” when they are bred and farmed for agricultural production.

I discuss in more detail about the classificatory issues shortly, but I first review the two main terms – “farm animal” and “livestock” – that are used when referring to animals raised for producing food. These terms have highly different cultural connotations. “Livestock” appears to be more commodifying than “farm animal” (comp. Webster 1994, 128). In this term, live animal is associated, or almost equalised, with the meat it produces: “livestock” literally refers to “stock (food) which is alive” (Yarwood & Evans 1998). As zoologist Juliet Clutton-Brock (1999, 62) writes, “[I]t is difficult to preserve meat – – [W]hen meat is required, it is better to store meat as ‘livestock’ rather than to keep it as dead flesh”. In contrast, “farm animal” is less commodifying. In this term the animal is still named as an “animal” (while in “livestock” the word animal is absent) and the term simply refers to the animal’s function for human utility. It seems that since “livestock” appears to attach a stronger commodity status to animals, it is associated more strongly with large-

scale industrialised farming, while the term “farm animal” appears to be used more extensively in the contexts of hobby farming or small-scale family farming (comp. Wilkie 2005, 221).³

To go back to the classificatory issues, it has been well documented that the category of “farm animal” is a highly ambiguous cultural category. In order to keep an animal in food production it must be distinguished from “pets” that are subjected to food taboos – it must be constructed as an “edible animal” that can be killed as a part of the food production process⁴. Pets appear “too human” to be consumed as they live in a close proximity with people and as they have been “de-bestialised” through training, trimming, sterilising and even de-clawing (Eder 1996, 86–88; Fiddes 1991, 132–135; Franklin 1999, 41). In contrast, farm animals are constructed as highly distant from people, and in this way they are unambiguously “animals” (not semi-humans) that can be eaten: these animals are spatially removed from the everyday life of ordinary consumers (see section 2.2) and they are not as “humanised” (e.g. trained and trimmed) as pets (*ibid.*; Philo 1995, 664–671). (See more discussion on food taboos in Eder 1996, 58–106; Fiddes 1991, 132–143; Thomas 1983, 54–55; Tuomivaara 2004, 109–113; Twigg 1983.)

However, the status of an animal as a “farm animal” is not fixed and clear, but its status between the categories of “farm animal” and “pet” is transient, unclear and subjected to constant negotiation and re-negotiation (comp. Arluke 1988, 98–99, 116; Arluke & Sanders 1996, 86–87, 101–106; Wilkie 2005, 222–224). For instance, a rabbit, a pig or a lamb can in some occasions be kept as a “pet” and in other occasions as a “farm animal”. Similarly, different cultural products, such as film the “Babe” (in which the pig Babe took the place of a dog – perhaps the “pet of the pets” – at the farm), have constructed a common farm animal as a pet-like, subjective, thinking and feeling animal. Similarly, among farmers and stockpeople the distinction between a “pet” and a “livestock” can be rather blurred: the commodity status of farm animals is not fixed but they can be, in sociologist Rhoda Wilkie’s (2005) terms, “commodified” and “recommodified”. For instance, as in dairy and breeding farms a relatively small amount of animals are kept at the farm for a number of years and looked after daily, these animals are often subjected to feelings of attachment and regarded as “friends”, but

³ Similar contradictions can be found also in the Finnish terminology on farm animals (“production animal” (*tuotantoeläin*) and “domestic animal” (*kotieläin*)), as I have noted elsewhere (Kupsala 2007).

⁴ “Pet” refers to animals that are kept mainly for companionship reasons, without any attempts to get material utility from them (e.g. MOT Dictionary of Modern Finnish “*lemmikkieläin*”). Surely, the moral status of pets varies in different contexts: while some pets can be regarded almost as family members, other pets can for instance be put down when they become “problematic” (see e.g. Arluke & Sanders 1996, 170–171; Franklin 1999, 49; Holloway 2001, 297–298; Tuomivaara 2004, 97–98). However, pets are still never eaten in normal situations and generally the relationship toward them is based on emotional attachments rather than on economic values.

these animals have to be recommodified again at the end of their production period (Convery et al. 2005, 105–106; Holloway 2001, 302–304; Wilkie 2005, 218–219, 224–228).

2.2 Politicisation of farm animal issues

In recent decades human – farm animal relations have become increasingly ambivalent in modern urbanised societies. Livestock production has intensified considerably, but at the same time empathetic attitudes to animals have increased. Growing ambiguities in human – farm animal relations have lead to the politicisation of farm animal issues. In this section, I review these developments further, discussing what kind of resolutions alternative livestock production schemes offer to the growing ambiguities in human – farm animal relations.

Livestock production started intensifying rapidly from the 1950s onwards in Western countries. The industrialisation of animal farming is characterised for instance by the growth in farm unit sizes, increasing specialisation in one type of animal farming, high levels of automation (and thus a declined need of farm labour), the growing reliance on bought-in, industrial feedstuffs (instead of home-grown feedstuffs), year-round indoor raising of animals (mainly in pig and poultry production), reliance on highly productive or fast growing breeds, systematic mutilations, and high stocking densities, all of which have contributed to the growth in the productivity and the efficiency of livestock production (see overviews e.g. in Baars et al. 2004; Franklin 1999, 126–144; Rifkin 1992, 113–150; Swabe 1999, 118–135). The industrialisation of farming has been accompanied with a significant growth in the consumption of livestock products: for instance, in Finland the annual consumption of meat per person has more than doubled since the 1950s (from about 30 kg/person in the beginning of the 1950s to 73.5 kg/person in 2006) (Maula 1995, 25–26; TIKE 2007, 5)⁵. This increase in meat consumption has been reflected also in the slaughter figures: the amount of pigs slaughtered annually in Finland has risen from 0.51 million in 1960 to about two millions in 2000, and the same figures are in the case of poultry 0.55 million and a remarkable 46.1 millions respectively (Markkola, ed., 2004, 470).

⁵ I regard the early statistics reported by Maula and the later statistics of the food balance sheets as comparable since Maula is just reporting the same official food balance sheets in her research. However, there has been a noteworthy change in the calculation methods used in food balance sheets, which makes the earlier consumption figures to appear somewhat smaller. Namely, from 1969 onwards the edible offal was included in the meat consumption figures of the food balance sheets, while previously they were left out from calculations (Maula 1995, 27). However, since the amount of edible offal has been rather low (e.g. 1.44 kg/person in 2006 (TIKE 2007, 20)), this change in calculation methods does not really undermine the noted overall trend – that the total meat consumption has more than doubled from the 1950s.

The industrialisation of animal farming has created new kinds of animal welfare problems, and it has been subjected to a widespread criticism on animal welfare grounds. Surely, the modernisation of livestock production brought certain advantages to animal welfare compared to earlier animal farming systems, such as improvements in housing conditions (air-conditioning, temperature and lighting), in feeding and in healthcare (Baars et al. 2004, 17). Similarly, the keeping of farm animals in highly confined conditions is not a completely new development as animals could be kept in cramped pens also in earlier times (Swabe 1999, 123; Thomas 1983, 93–94). However, although it is not possible to draw any idyllic picture of the earlier extensive forms of animal agriculture, the intensive animal farming has brought new kinds of animal welfare problems that did not exist before. In particular, there has been a widespread introduction of animal farming methods that highly restrict animal movement and behaviour, such as battery cages for laying hens, farrowing crates for sows and confined group pens for pigs. Similarly, the aim to maximise the productivity of animals has put much strain to their physiology, leading to production-related diseases, such as mastitis and foot problems. (See e.g. Baars et al. 2004; Swabe 1999, 125–135.)

The industrial livestock production has been subjected to an increasing societal criticism. Consumer studies indicate that consumers are concerned for farm animal welfare issues and they tend to view the level of animal welfare in intensive forms of animal farming highly negatively (Kjærnes et al. 2005; Ngapo et al. 2004; Phan-Huy & Fawaz 2003, 122; Verbeke & Viaene 2000, 145–147). For instance, in a recent Eurobarometer survey, 58 percent of respondents from all EU countries (in Finland 62 percent) regarded the welfare/protection of laying hens as fairly bad or very bad, and in the case of fattening pigs the figure was 44 percent (in Finland 37 percent), while the dairy farming was viewed more positively – the figure was only 25 percent for dairy cows (in Finland even less, 14 percent) (EC 2005, 10, 14, 18, tables Q8.2). Negative views towards intensive farming appear to be based on consumers' appreciation of naturalness in their understandings of animal welfare: animals are viewed as faring well when they can perform their “natural” behaviour and live in conditions that mimic nature (e.g. in outdoors and exposed to natural light) (e.g. Miele & Evans 2006, 195). Moreover, consumers appear to associate animal welfare with small scale and traditional farming, emphasising the importance of the individual care of animals and farmers' role in animal care (ibid. 193–194). Consumer concerns also extend to the slaughtering industry. As the slaughtering of animals has become increasingly highly rationalised, mass slaughter of animals (due to the growing meat consumption and the concentration of the slaughtering industry), it has been associated with growing feelings of uneasiness. The industrial slaughter of thousands of animals

day-round in a single plant is clearly differentiated from seasonal and small scale one-to-one slaughter. (Vialles 1987/1994, 31.)

This growing consumer concern has implied that farm animal welfare issues have become increasingly politicised: the animal advocacy movements have expanded since the 1970s, a new kind of animal rights movement has emerged, the public discussion on farm animal welfare issues has become more prominent, and vegetarianism as well as the consumption of alternative livestock products have increased (see e.g. Franklin 1999, 160–172, 175–188; Juppi 2004, 24–44; Kean 1998). Likewise, farm animal welfare policy has become more and more influential, particularly in Europe, with the introduction of increasingly stringent animal welfare regulations and new farm animal welfare subsidy schemes (e.g. Garner 1998, 139–175; Miele et al. 2005). For instance, in the EU the tethering of sows and gilts as well as the individual pens for small calves have become disallowed, and in Finland the summer-time outdoor access to certain types of cows and heifers have become obligatory (e.g. Rowan et al. 1999, 61–66). Similarly, in Finland an organic livestock support scheme was introduced in 2005 and a farm animal welfare support scheme in 2007.

The politicisation of farm animal issues is a part of a wider growth in animal-empathetic attitudes: animals have become increasingly objects of love, care, admiration and protection in late modern societies. For instance, pets have become emotionally and therapeutically more important to people; wild animal-related leisure activities have increased (e.g. whale watching and animal safaris); and pro-animal themes have been circulated in popular media (e.g. in films like *Free Willy* and *Babe*). Similarly, animal advocacy movements have been growing, and important animal welfare policy reforms have been introduced in different areas of animal utilisation (such as banning fur farms in some countries). (See e.g. Franklin 1999, 34–61; Kean 1998; Tuomivaara 2004.)

The rise in animal ethical concerns has been explained in a diversity of ways and the review of these explanations goes beyond the scope of this study.⁶ Here it is sufficient to focus on farm animals and note the central role of food scandals in evoking the public interest in farm animal topics. The media

⁶ For instance, developments in the sciences, particularly in primate studies, cognitive ethology and animal welfare sciences have brought new information about the mental capacities and experiential world of animals, and these scientific results have been actively popularised through certain individual animals, such as the gorilla Koko and the chimpanzee Washoe. Similarly, it has been argued that animals (particularly pets) have become an increasingly important source of ontological security in late modern societies as humans' relations with each other have become increasingly voluntary, uncertain, open and transient (Franklin 1999, 56–57). Moreover, it has been noted that the increasing and more intensive usage of animals has created new kinds of moral problems that did not exist before, which has created a basis for new kinds of animal advocacy movements (comp. Aaltola 2004, 13–14; Juppi 2004, 36; Tuomivaara & Purmonen 1998, 70).

has reported on a diversity of negative stories concerning farm animal welfare, typically based on the undercover material by animal advocacy organisations: for instance live export of animals in EU, defeathering of live poultry in Eastern Europe, the exposé of poor conditions of pigs and poultry in Finnish pig and poultry farms (<http://www.oikeuttaelaimille.net/ttnet/>) – and the list could continue (comp. Franklin 1999, 143). Moreover, health-related food scandals, such as salmonella, listeria, BSE, dioxin crisis, foot and mouth disease and bird flu, have attracted people's attention to livestock production issues (ibid. 162–174). Although the public interest in food scandals have been based on health concerns, the widespread media attention to food scandals has also made the conditions of animals and animal management practices in intensive farms more visible to ordinary people, which may have sensitised them also to animal welfare issues (e.g. Harper & Makatouni 2002; Miele & Evans 2005). Furthermore, health and animal welfare concerns tend to be quite intermingled as consumers tend to make a strong connection between animal welfare and the healthiness of the product: the product from a healthy and happy animal appears healthy too, free from stress hormones and pharmaceutical residues (Harper & Makatouni 2002; Holm & Møhl 2000, 278–280; Miele & Evans 2005; Ngapo et al. 2004).

Some consumers have changed their consumption behaviour as a response to their growing concerns for farm animal welfare. Vegetarianism, the favouring of low meat diets and the consumption of alternative livestock products (e.g. organic and free range products) have increased (e.g. Franklin 1999, 160–174; Harper & Makatouni 2002). Surely, animal welfare concerns are not a sole reason for these consumption changes, but they include a range of other motives, such as health, food quality, environmental and social justice reasons (e.g. Franklin 1999, 152, 161; McEachern & McClean 2002, 88; O'Donovan & McCarthy 2002). However, it seems that animal welfare issues have started to receive an increasingly important place within alternative livestock production schemes, and they have begun to make rather extensive animal welfare claims (e.g. Miele & Evans 2005; Padel et al. 2004). They appear to offer a more moderate resolution to consumer ambiguities than vegetarianism or veganism, which probably has helped these schemes to enjoy more widespread popularity than the vegetarian alternative. Obviously, the basic values in alternative livestock production schemes differ clearly from animal rights views (comp. Lund et al. 2004a, 27–28). They represent a type of “welfarism”, according to which it is permissible to keep animals as property, to use them to gain human benefits and to kill them as a part of farming processes, provided that certain welfare conditions are met (see Francione 1996, 8–9). In contrast, in animal rights views this idea of instrumental value of animals is rejected, and animals are given an inherent value, which is a basis for certain non-violable rights, such as a right to live (ibid. 25–27).

Although the popularity of alternative livestock products has increased, their consumption has been much lower than the above-mentioned survey studies would point to (comp. Schröder & McEachern 2004, 169). There appears to be a clear gap between consumer attitudes and actual consumption behaviour, as in many other areas of ethical consumption (e.g. Ahonen 2006, 78). For instance, while 58 percent of respondents from all EU countries regard the welfare/protection of laying hens as fairly bad or very bad, as noted above, 89 percent of the all eggs consumed in the EU-15 countries still come from cage systems (in Finland battery eggs comprise 83.4 percent of total egg production) (Agra CEAS Consulting 2004, 65–66; Finfood Kananmunatiedotus 2007). Similarly, although the consumption of organic livestock products have increased, the market share of these products has still staid in few percents (Hamm & Gronefeld 2003). Various reasons have been put forward to explain this gap between attitudes and behaviour, such as the limited availability and high price of alternative products as well as unclear labelling systems (e.g. Harper & Makatouni 2002; O'Donovan & McCarthy 2002).

Moreover, it seems that consumers characteristically dissociate a product from the animal it is sourced from. In other words, while consumers appear to have ambivalent feelings to animal farming and slaughtering, for many the resolution to these uncomfortable feelings has been the concealing of the animal origins of the food rather than changing consumption behaviour. In focus group and interview studies, consumers have stated consistently that they do not want to think about the conditions of animals when buying livestock products and that they prefer to buy the meat in small cuts, ready packed, or as ready-meals, so that it does not include any visible parts of animals, such as skin and bones (e.g. Holm & Møhl 2000, 279–280; Schipper et al. 2006, 537–539; Schröder & McEachern 2004, 171–172). In fact, in human–animal studies it has been well documented how animal farming and slaughtering has been gradually concealed from the public view during modernisation – how farm animals and abattoirs have been displaced from cities and how the animal origin of meat has been concealed both discursively and materially (Fiddes 1991, 99–100; Kean 1998, 28–30, 58–64; Philo 1995, 665–676; Thomas 1983, 294–302; Vialles 1987/1994).

In this way, alternative livestock production schemes have offered a more marginal resolution to consumer ambiguities than the dissociation practices. However, their popularity has been growing importantly in recent years, and they have become increasingly a viable alternative for many (Harper & Makatouni 2002; Miele & Evans 2005). This raises a question what kind of resolution, more specifically, they are offering to consumer ambiguities, and what kind of alternative model they are proposing to conventional farming. Organic farming provides an interesting case to

investigate this issue. It is the only “animal friendly” food certification scheme that has a global coverage, with internationally rather uniform standards (see section 3.1), while other schemes tend to be country-specific. In Finland, organic farming is the only food certification scheme that includes extensive animal welfare standards.

It has been noted that there is much diversity in the welfare claims proposed by various labelling schemes (e.g. Roe & Higgin 2006). There is no precise definition for the meaning of “animal welfare” or “better animal welfare”, but these terms are highly contested. Various approaches in animal welfare science define animal welfare differently, and also the understandings of animal welfare among consumers, producers and industry actors vary. (E.g. Fraser et al. 1997.) In this way, the meanings of animal welfare are constantly constructed, negotiated and contested in different social contexts. This raises a question how animal welfare has been constructed in the organic sector. However, organic farming – similarly to other alternative livestock production schemes – has been studied only minimally from human–animal studies perspectives, despite its heightened societal importance.

2.3 Animal welfare

The term animal welfare disposes us to think about the quality of life, happiness, suffering, pleasure and pain of animals. The term presumes that animals are indeed sentient – capable of experiencing positive and negative feelings that matter to them (comp. Webster 1994, 22–23). Similarly to other broad and complex concepts, such as “health” and “happiness”, it is not possible to give any single definition to animal welfare. Rather, a variety of definitions have been put forward in animal ethics and in animal welfare science. Perhaps one of the most famous definitions in animal welfare science has associated animal welfare to an animal’s ability to cope with its environment (Fraser & Broom 1990, 4). Animals have a diversity of coping methods, such as physiological changes and behavioural alterations, to respond to environmental challenges (e.g. temperature, pathogens and social influences). If an animal has great difficulties in coping with its environment, its welfare can become very poor, eventually leading to its death or inability to reproduce. (Ibid.) Similarly, another important definition for animal welfare has been Farm Animal Welfare Council’s (FAWC) *Five Freedoms*, which include a freedom from hunger and thirst, from discomfort, from pain, injury and disease, from fear and stress as well as freedom to express normal behaviour (FAWC No date). This framework is a rather comprehensive definition of animal welfare since it includes a wide array of

factors that can contribute to animal welfare, ranging from basic physical needs to behavioural needs and emotional states of animals (see Webster 1994, 11–14).

The conceptions of animal welfare have typically been divided in three main approaches – the natural living approach, the biological functioning approach and the subjective experience approach (Fraser et al. 1997). According to animal welfare scientist David Fraser and his research group (ibid. 191–192), in the natural living approach, “an animal’s welfare depends on its being allowed to perform its ‘natural’ behaviour and live a ‘natural’ life”, according to its “genetically encoded ‘nature’”. Natural behaviour and physiology refer to the behaviour patterns and physiological characters developed during the evolutionary history of the animal species and having been encoded to the genetic make-up of each animal, still continuing in many respects in domesticated animals despite selective breeding (e.g. Waiblinger et al. 2004, 119–120). According to the biological functioning approach, an animal fares well when its biological systems function normally and when there are no considerable disturbances in this functioning (e.g. diseases, malnutrition and injuries), which in turn can secure the survival and optimise the reproduction of the animal. In the subjective experience approach, the focus is upon the feelings and individual experiences of animals. Animal welfare is associated with the minimising of negative feelings, such as suffering, pain, fear and anxiety, and the promotion of positive feelings, such as joy and satisfaction. (Fraser et al. 1997.)

The diversity of definitions of animal welfare indicates that animal welfare means different things in different contexts, and its meaning can be contested. For instance, it seems that consumers’ and producers’ understandings of animal welfare diverge significantly. While consumers emphasise “naturalness” and individual care in their conceptualisations of animal welfare, as noted above, producers seem to approach animal welfare more from the biological functioning perspective: they tend to define animal welfare in terms of the basic biological needs of animals (e.g. water- and food-intake and climatic conditions), and the physical healthiness and productivity of animals are used as indicators of the welfare status of animals (Bock & van Huik 2007, 937). Similarly, in alternative livestock production schemes animal welfare may be defined in different ways. For instance, organic farming tends to lay much emphasis on the “natural living” perspective (see section 6.1.2), while other schemes may put more attention to the physical healthiness of animals.

The question of animal welfare is often separated from the question of the moral value of animal life. Animal welfare typically refers to the quality of life of animals *during* their lifetime, and the

questions concerning the morality of exploiting and killing animals for human use are considered to be separate issues. As animal welfare scientists David Fraser and Donald Broom (1990, 257) write,

[Q]uestions about whether or not man [sic] should kill animals or exploit animals need not be related to questions about welfare. If an animal is suddenly shot, with no previous warning that this might happen, and it dies instantly, then there is a moral question about whether such killing should occur but there is no welfare problem.

There are a diversity of positions on the moral value of animal life, ranging from pure welfarism, in which no value is given to the life of animals per se and attention is given merely to the treatment of animals during their lifetime, to a strong animal rights position, in which killing of animals is accepted only in extreme situations, such as self-defence (comp. Francione 1996). As I noted above, organic livestock production diverges from the animal rights position and represents a type of “welfarism”, according to which it is permissible to kill animals for food production. However, this does not exclude a possibility that a certain value to the life of animals can be given in organic farming discourses since some approaches in organic farming can encourage the adoption of low meat diets and the promotion of the longevity of animals in production. In this research, I focus on the question of constructing animal welfare in organic farming. The question of the moral standing of animals is so wide that analysing its construction in organic discourses would be a topic for another study.

3 Organic farming and farm animal welfare

As the organic farming sector has expanded and its societal importance has grown, social scientific studies on organic production have been increasing from the 1990s onwards. Nowadays this research field covers a variety of topics, such as organic farmers’ attitudes, values and conversion motives (e.g. Hall & Moggyorody 2001; Lockie & Halpin 2005), organic consumers’ attitudes and understandings (e.g. Magnusson et al. 2001; Makatouni 2002), organic standards and certification (e.g. Boström & Klintman 2006; Campbell & Liepins 2001; Guthman 1998; Michelsen 2001) and the question of the “conventionalisation” of organic farming (e.g. Buck et al. 1997; Coombes & Campbell 1998; Guthman 2004b; Hall & Moggyorody 2001; Lockie & Halpin 2005). The social scientific research on organic farming has increased also in Finland: research topics have included farmer motives and views (Kallio 1998; Luoto et al. 1996; Susiluoma 1993), consumer views (e.g. Arvola & Lähteenmäki 2003; Isoniemi 2005; Kakriainen et al. 2006; Niva et al. 2004), the historical

development of Finnish organic farming (Heinonen 2002; Heinonen 2006) and the construction of organic farming in Finnish organic actor-networks (Mononen 2008) (see extensive reviews on organic farming literature in Mononen 1999, Mononen 2002 and Mononen 2008, 28–36).

However, organic livestock production has tended to receive only a limited attention in the research field. Since in the early phases of organic farming the developmental efforts concentrated on the crop side of production and since markets for organic plant products have been wider than for livestock products (see section 3.2), studies have tended to be biased towards crop production. Only very recently social scientists have started showing more interest in organic livestock production as its importance within the organic sector has been growing. Despite this recent growth, the social scientific analysis of organic animal farming has been limited: there have been only a few studies on organic livestock producers' views about animal welfare (Bock & van Huik 2007; Flaten et al. 2006; Lund et al. 2002; Lund et al. 2004b; van Huik & Bock 2006), “conventionalisation” issues in organic production (Guptill 2008) and consumer perceptions about organic livestock production (Harper & Makatouni 2002; McEachern & McClean 2002; O'Donovan & McCarthy 2002). In Finland, I have identified only two studies that have somewhat focused on organic livestock production: Pia Tanskanen's (2001) master's thesis on organic livestock farmers' environmental views and social psychologist Annukka Vainio's and colleagues' (2007) study on farmers' attitudes to animal welfare, which includes a small sample of organic farmers. In this way, organic livestock production has received very little attention from the perspectives of the sociology of human–animal relations.

In this section, I examine the place of animal welfare in organic farming. I begin with reviewing the definitions of “organic livestock production” as defined in organic standards. I also discuss whether organic farming brings any animal welfare benefits compared to conventional farming. After this I examine the place of animal welfare in the historical development of organic farming and describe the development of the Finnish organic livestock production sector. Finally, I review the discussion concerning business–ideology tensions and “conventionalisation” in organic farming.

3.1 What is organic animal farming?

Nowadays the meaning of organic animal farming is specifically defined in organic farming standards, and there are extensive rules that regulate which farming practices can be classified as

organic. Currently the term “organic” is legally protected: only products that have been produced according to certain organic standards can be advertised and sold as “organic”.

In Finland the term “luonnonmukainen tuotanto” has been established to refer to organic farming. The Finnish term clearly differs from the terms used in other countries – biologic, ecological or organic farming. These terms contain different kinds of connotations. “Biologic” and “ecologic” (which are used in South and Central Europe and in Scandinavian countries) appear to denote that farming is practiced according to biological and ecological laws and that the farm is approached holistically as a biological or ecological whole, which differs from the physico-chemical approach in conventional farming. The term “organic” (which is used in English-speaking countries), in its turn, denotes favouring organic or biotic inputs (e.g. compost) over inorganic inputs (e.g. chemically synthesised fertilisers) in farming practices and approaching the farm as an “organic whole” (comp. Mononen 2008, 24). It is difficult to translate the Finnish term “luonnonmukainen” into English. Literally it could be translated as “nature-compliant” farming. The term denotes aspirations to follow or mimic nature and to go according to nature’s course (comp. Mononen 2008, 71). In the case of animals, the term denotes that animals can live “luonnonmukaisesti” – “naturally” or according to their “nature”, i.e. in accordance with their essential character, which has been encoded in their genes through the evolutionary process of the species (see section 6.1.2).

In this section, I introduce the “official” definition of organic animal farming as it is defined in organic farming standards. Certainly, there is a diversity of understandings about what organic farming means, and the meaning of organic farming is constantly being constructed in different contexts, such as in the media, in consumers’ talk, in actual farming practices and in inspection procedures. However, the organic standards-setting has increasingly become the core arena in which the meaning of organic farming is defined (see section 3.5.3).

Perhaps the most authoritative definition of organic farming is given by the *International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements* (IFOAM), an umbrella organisation for organic farming organisations worldwide. IFOAM has set four *Principles of Organic Agriculture*: health, ecology, fairness and care. In *the principle of health*, the healthiness of the soil – its liveliness and biological activity – is associated with the healthiness of plants, animals and people. This principle emphasises preventive health care (which is applicable also to animals) and an aspiration to avoid chemical fertilisers, pesticides, veterinary medicines and food additives that may be harmful to health. The *principle of ecology* emphasises the importance to farm according to ecological principles and to

work compatibly with natural cycles. Similarly, it expresses aspirations to minimise the usage of external inputs (such as fertilisers) at the farm, to adapt farming to local conditions and to maintain genetic diversity. The *principle of fairness* emphasises the equality and justice between people involved in the organic farming sector as well as food sovereignty, reduction of poverty, and the rights of future generations. Importantly, this principle sets certain moral rules concerning animal treatment, “[A]nimals should be provided with the conditions and opportunities of life that accord with their physiology, natural behaviour and well-being.” Significantly, the usage of the term “natural behaviour” indicates that the “naturalness” is an important element in the definition of animal welfare in organic farming (see section 6.1.2). The *principle of care* emphasises precaution when new technologies are introduced into farming, rejects genetic engineering and gives much value to traditional and indigenous knowledge alongside scientific knowledge. (IFOAM 2006, 4–6.)

Another important official definition of organic farming in the European context is the Council Regulation on organic production. In the EU, all products marketed as “organic” need to meet the minimum production and processing requirements set in the Council Regulation. The Council Regulation on organic production (EEC) 2092/91 was introduced in 1991, and this regulation was repealed recently and fully renewed with a new Council Regulation (EC) 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products. The main rules in organic plant production include a general prohibition of chemically synthesised fertilisers and plant protection products. Instead of chemical fertilisers, plants are nourished with organic materials (e.g. compost and animal manure). Also legumes and other green manure crops are used since they can absorb nitrogen into the soil. Plants are protected from pests and weeds by using, for example, resistant plant species, crop rotations, mechanical weeding methods as well as supporting the natural predators of pests. It is possible to use fertilisers and plant protection products that are not chemically synthesised, such as plant- or animal-derived substances and natural minerals. (Council Regulation (EC) 834/2007, Articles 4, 5 and 12.)

As regards to livestock production, the Council Regulation (EC) 834/2007 includes a diversity of rules concerning the stocking densities, feeding, veterinary treatment, reproduction, husbandry practices and housing conditions of animals. All these rules attempt to meet certain environmental concerns (e.g. pollution from animal manure), health concerns (e.g. medicine or hormone residues in livestock products) and animal welfare concerns (e.g. housing conditions). I list the most important rules set in the Council Regulation below:

Balance between livestock production and plant production:

- The number of animals should correspond to the amount of feed that the farm can produce, and the land should be capable of absorbing the manure produced in the farm without causing any environmental damage (comp. Padel et al. 2004, 64). Thus, landless livestock production is prohibited and only a certain amount of animals per hectare are allowed.

Feeding rules:

- Feedstuffs should be obtained primarily from the farm or from other organic farms in the same region, although a minimum ratio of *feed self-sufficiency* (50 %) is required only in the case of herbivorous animals, while the feeding of omnivorous animals (pigs and poultry) can be based even fully on bought-in feedstuffs.
- Animals should be fed with *organic feedstuffs*, although a certain ration of in-conversion feedstuffs is allowed.
- Feed materials, feed additives, processing aids and nutriment should be mainly *plant-, animal- and mineral-derived, rather than synthetic materials*. There are several restrictions in feeding materials – for instance slaughter by-products, growth promoters and synthetic amino acids are disallowed.
- Suckling mammals should be fed with *natural milk*.
- Animals should have a permanent access to pasture or *roughage*.

Healthcare:

- In organic farming *preventive healthcare* is emphasised, which helps minimising the usage of medicines. Diseases should be prevented, for instance, by breed and strain selection, by using good quality feedstuffs and through appropriate stocking densities.
- The *medicine usage is somewhat restricted* to minimise the medicine residues in livestock products. For instance, phytotherapeutic, homeopathic products and some other products are preferred to “chemically-synthesised allopathic veterinary medicines”, such as antibiotics. Moreover, certain restrictions to the courses of treatment and withholding periods are given.

Reproduction:

- *Cloning and embryo transfer is disallowed*. Likewise, reproduction should not be induced by using hormones or other similar substances.
- Breeds should be selected according to the capacity of animals to adapt to local conditions, their vitality and disease resistance. *Breeds or strains that tend to have certain health problems should be avoided* (e.g. incapacity to give birth naturally like the Belgian Blue cow).

Husbandry practices and housing conditions:

- *Outdoor access* is required when weather conditions permit.
- *Tethering* of animals and the usage of *cages* are generally prohibited.
- *Minimum space requirements* are laid down.
- *Fully slatted floors are disallowed* and a certain proportion of the floor must be solid. Also *ample dry bedding* is required.
- *Mutilations* should be kept in minimum.

I review in more detail the animal welfare standards in organic farming in section 3.4.

3.2 Historical development of organic livestock production

In this section, I aim to show that animal welfare has only recently received a more important status in organic farming, while historically it tended to have a secondary importance compared to health and environmental issues. Similarly, the development of organic livestock production has tended to

lag behind that of organic crop production (Vaarst et al. 2004, 4). For a long time, the attention in organic farming tended to focus on the crop side of organic production, such as the biological activity of the soil, crop rotations and plant health. The regulation, research, education, advice and markets have become institutionalised earlier in crop production than in livestock production. (Ibid.)

Organic farming is not a recent development; early forms of organic farming started developing from the beginning of the 20th century. In these early forms, the central issues were the healthiness of the soil and the food products, and animal welfare issues did not yet occupy an important role. In other words, there were aspirations to counteract the soil exhaustion and erosion, which were associated with the growing usage of artificial fertilisers and with other farming methods practiced in conventional farming. The impoverishment of the soil was viewed as causing decline in crop yields and the onset of plant diseases. Similarly, the association of the healthiness of food with the healthiness of the soil provided an important motivation to develop organic farming methods, such as composting, that keep the soil alive and maintain its biological activity. The quest for healthy food was partly connected to the emergence of “life reform” movements and natural health movements, which seek a more natural way of living. (Heinonen 2004, 331–333; Mononen 2008, 64–65; Vaarst et al. 2004, 4–5.) During this period, animal farming was mainly viewed as a means to improve crop production, for instance, through utilising animal manure in soil fertilising. However, an important exception was biodynamic farming, in which farm animals, particularly cows, were regarded as a central part of the farm’s ecosystem (or of a “farm organism”, as the farm is conceptualised in biodynamic farming). Rudolf Steiner, whose lectures gave a starting point to this anthroposophist form of organic farming, regarded animals as spiritual beings and viewed that people have a duty to respect and look after them well. (Padel et al. 2004, 57–58, 60.)

From an animal welfare perspective, an interesting development was vegetarian “livestock-free farming” in the early phases of organic farming. The vegetarian movement started rising in the end of the 19th century, and some of the vegetarians could not accept any exploitation of animals in food production, which created demand for food that was produced without using animals at all. However, in Finland this form of farming remained highly marginal and soon became overshadowed by biodynamic farming. (Heinonen 2006.) There has been a new rise in livestock-free farming only recently: “vegan organic farming” started developing as an organised movement in the UK in the mid-1990s, and it has also been practiced in the Finnish vegan movement (Vegan Organic Network No Date). However, vegan organic farming as an ideological movement has remained highly marginal in organic farming, and animals have played a central role in the mainstream forms of

organic agriculture. They provide manure to fertilise the soil (as artificial fertilisers are not used) and to improve the humus, and ruminants can feed with green forages that absorb nitrogen to the soil and that are an important part of the crop rotation methods of organic farming (e.g. Lund et al. 2004a, 31–32).

Organic farming remained highly marginal until the 1970s when it started expanding as a part of the wider growth in environmental concerns (see Mononen 2008, 12–13). During this growth period, animal welfare issues had still a minor role, and the main interest to develop organic farming was based on environmental and health concerns. The usage of chemical plant-protective agents and artificial fertilisers had increased considerably since the mid-century and concern was developing about their harmful environmental and health impacts (Heinonen 2004, 337; Niemelä 2004, 219–222, 224, 227). Moreover, the usage of artificial fertilisers and control substances made the development of intensive landless livestock production units possible. The previous strong connection between crop and livestock production started to decline since animal manure could be substituted with artificial fertilisers and since, due to the usage of pesticides and herbicides, there was no longer a need for crop rotation that included grass-lands (Baars et al. 2004, 14; Niemelä 2004, 224). Thus, specialised livestock production units, based on the use of bought-in feedstuffs could evolve alongside the intensive cultivation of feedstuffs and food crops in fields with little species diversity. This change led to increasing concerns about manure pollution from the intensive livestock units, as the manure they produced could not be fully utilised in the local crop production. Likewise, there were concerns for the environmental and social effects of the bought-in feedstuffs, such as soy forage that was grown in fields cleared from rain forests. All these factors induced changes in organic farming standards. The balance between crop and livestock production became increasingly emphasised: the farm ecosystem should be capable of absorbing the manure produced by the farm's livestock and the livestock should be fed with home-grown feedstuffs (Padel et al. 2004, 59).

Livestock production started to receive more attention in organic farming from the 1980s onwards and the markets of organic livestock products begun to develop. This is related to the raising of both health and animal welfare concerns (see section 2.2). For instance, due to the growing concern for the chemical residues (such as DDT and other organochlorines) in animal products, the usage of conventional feedstuffs in the diets of organic livestock became restricted. Similarly, consumer worries about antibiotic and hormone residues in livestock products led to the disallowing of certain hormonal treatments, restricting the usage of antibiotics and extending withholding periods for

medicine treatments. Moreover, because of the BSE crisis, the usage of animal-derived substances in the feeding of organic animals became increasingly restricted. Similarly, due to concerns for genetically modified organisms, GM-derived components were banned from the diets of organic animals. Moreover, as a result of rising farm animal welfare concerns, animal welfare standards in organic farming became more stringent and elaborate (see section 3.4). (Padel et al. 2004, 59–61.)

3.3 Development of organic livestock production in Finland

Like in many other countries, organic farming in Finland has expanded and become increasingly institutionalised in the last two decades. The government has started regulating the sector and introduced organic subsidy schemes. Alongside organic crop production, organic livestock production has also been expanding, though it has remained rather marginal compared to crop production.

Early forms of organic farming started developing in Finland in the beginning of the 20th century, similarly to many other countries. As noted above (section 3.2), livestock-free farming started to expand in this early period, but it remained highly marginal. Biodynamic farming was the strongest form of alternative farming in the beginning of the century, but it was still practiced only in few farms until the war years. After this it started expanding, with the foundation of The Biodynamic Association in 1946 and the introduction of the Demeter certification in 1954. (Heinonen 2004, 336–337.) Subsequent to this early formation phase, the organic sector started growing in Finland in the 1970s as a part of the wider growth in environmental concerns (Heinonen 2004, 339). Several organic farming societies were formed in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. Mononen 2008, 69), and these societies founded FAOF as their umbrella organisation in 1985. FAOF introduced first national organic farming standards and inspection system in 1986 (see more about the development of FAOF's organic farming regulation in section 5.2).

The government started forming policies on organic farming in the 1980s. It began to support advisory work, education and training as well as research in the organic farming sector. The conversion support scheme for organic farming was introduced in 1990, the organic farming subsidy scheme in 1995 and organic livestock support scheme in 2005. The governmental inspection system for organic crop production was introduced in 1994 when the Council Regulation (EEC) 2092/91 came into force in Finland because of the EEA-agreement (and later because of the EU membership). This was extended to organic livestock production in 2000 when the Council

Regulation (EC) 1804/1999 on organic livestock production came into force. The Government introduced its own organic label – Sun-label – in 1998, and it started funding a scheme, Finfood Luomu, that promotes markets for organic products and gives information about organic farming. (Heinonen 2004, 341–343; Rajala No date.) The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) leads the inspection of organic production. The Finnish Food Safety Authority (EVIRA) plans, directs and supervises the inspection of organic farming as well as the inspection of the processing and trade of organic products and organic feedstuffs. The Employment and Economic Development Centres carry out the actual inspection at organic farms. (MAF Decree 846/2008.)⁷ I have examined the governmentalisation of organic standards-setting and inspection activities in section 5.2.

From the 1990s onwards the organic sector has expanded significantly in Finland. The number of certified organic farms remained under 400 in the 1980s, but when the conversion subsidy scheme was introduced in 1990, the amount of organic farms almost doubled, and continued to grow in the 1990s. The introduction of the organic subsidy scheme (which gave farming support to all organic farms, not only to recently converted farms) in 1995 gave a new boost for the growth rate of organic farms. (Heinonen 2004, 339; Mononen 2008, 77–78.) Moreover, the average size of organic farms has been growing since large farms have entered in the field due to the declined economic risks of converting. Nowadays organic farms are even larger than conventional farms in terms of the size of the land under cultivation. (Mononen 2008, 77.) Organic farming has continued to expand worldwide also in this century (Yussefi 2005, 9–13), but in Finland the number of farms started to decline in 2000, from 5225 to 3896 in 2007. However, the share of organic land from the total agricultural land has not declined proportionally due to the growing size of organic farms: it continued to grow until 2004 when it began to decline, from 7.3 percent to 6.5 percent in 2007. (EVIRA 2007a.)

Organic livestock farming has also expanded in the 1990s in Finland. The number of certified organic livestock farms has increased from 144 in 1995 to 483 in 2007 (see table 1) (there are no statistics available on organic livestock farming prior 1995). The growth in the number of organic animals (and hence in the total production of the sector) has been even more significant than the growth in the number of farms, which implies that average sizes of organic farms have grown (see table 2). In particular, the organic dairy and egg production sectors have expanded significantly. The amount of dairy cows has increased from about 400 in 1995 to 4,764 in 2007, and the number of

⁷ The full Finnish name of the laws to which I am referring can be found in the references (section 8), under the sub-heading of “legal sources”. The Finnish counterpart of the law is identifiable with the number code of the law.

laying hens has increased from a mere 640 in 1995 to as much as 73 500 in 2007. The farming of organic goats and sheep has also expanded.

In contrast, organic meat production, particularly pig and poultry production, has not expanded as much. Both the amount of pig farms and the number of fattening pigs increased until 2000, after which they have diminished significantly, so that in 2007 there were only 11 pig farms in Finland. In the late 1990s and the early years of this century, there were some organic meat poultry enterprises in operation, but currently there is virtually no organic meat poultry production in Finland. Beef production gives a somewhat contradictory picture: the number of beef cattle has declined from 2001 onwards, but the number of cows rearing calves has increased considerably.

Table 1. The number of organic livestock farms by animal grouping.

| <i>Animal group</i> | <i>1995**</i> | <i>1997**</i> | <i>2000</i> | <i>2003</i> | <i>2007</i> |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Dairy cows | NA | 84 | 168 | 193 | 153 |
| Beef cattle | NA | NA | 161 | 165 | 144 |
| Cows for rearing calves | NA | NA | 99 | 107 | 214 |
| Ewes (with lambs, 0–6 months) | NA | 50 | 70 | 51 | 76 |
| Goats (with kids, 0–6 months) | NA | NA | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| Pigs for fattening | NA | 28 | 39 | 18 | 11 |
| Sows | NA | NA | 18 | 14 | 9 |
| Laying hens | NA | 45 | 45 | 57 | 33 |
| Meat poultry* | NA | NA | 1 | 7 | 1 |
| Total*** | 144 | 246 | 430 | 413 | 483 |

* In this category I have summed up all farms that have either ducks, geese, turkeys or broilers, which were categorised separately in FAOF's and EVIRA's statistics. Since some of these farms may have more than one poultry species, the farm may become included twice to this category (which can be the case only in the year of 2003).

** FAOF did not produce statistics on the number of farms in all animal production lines in 1995 and 1997.

However, in these years it still produced figures concerning the total number of all organic livestock farms.

*** The total number of organic livestock farms includes also horse, pony and honeybee farms, which I have not included in this table. It is also important to note that since one livestock farm may have several animal species or animal production lines, the total number of organic farms is smaller than simply counting up the farms with different animal species.

Table 2. The number of organic animals.

| <i>Animal group</i> | <i>1995</i> | <i>1997</i> | <i>2000</i> | <i>2003</i> | <i>2007</i> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Dairy cows | 397 | 1448 | 3654 | 4990 | 4764 |
| Beef cattle | NA | NA | 2799 | 2598 | 2212 |
| Cows for rearing calves | 137 | 833 | 1891 | 2376 | 6164 |
| Ewes (with lambs, 0-6 months) | 335 | 2083 | 3421 | 3386 | 6966 |
| Goats (with kids, 0-6 months) | 29 | 65 | 60 | 40 | 403 |
| Pigs for fattening | 561 | 1984 | 4778 | 2628 | 1720 |
| Sows | 30 | 169 | 527 | 584 | 315 |
| Laying hens | 641 | 9287 | 29045 | 75120 | 73516 |
| Other poultry | 302 | 2133 | 700 | 31 | 1 |

Sources (in both tables):

1995–1999: FAOF's organic livestock register.

2000–2007: KTTK (2002, 53–54); KTTK (2004); EVIRA (2007b).

When we look at the distribution of organic livestock farms, organic cattle farming emerges as the most important livestock production sector: about 32 percent of the farms have dairy cows and about 44 percent breeding cows. However, when we look at the market share of organic products, the most successful product is the organic egg. Its market share by value was 7.6 percent in 2007 (which makes it the second most popular organic product in Finland) (Finfood Luomu 2008a). In the case of milk and yoghurt/pudding/curd products, these figures were 2.6 percent and 1.2 percent respectively (ibid.). The share of organic meat from total meat sales was estimated to be only 0.6 percent in 2007 (Finfood Luomu 2008b).

Although organic livestock farming has expanded and its market share has increased, it has remained still a rather marginal type of farming. The amount of organic livestock farms is still very low compared to crop production. It has been estimated that 45 percent of organic farms have livestock, but only about 20 percent of them have converted their livestock production to organic farming (MAF 2005, 19). There are various explanations for this slow growth in organic livestock production. In particular, an important obstacle has been poorly developed markets (see Koikkalainen & Haataja 2000, 7, 43). Small, uneven and dispersed product supply, higher production costs, a need to invest in new commodity lines and to meet inspection requirements have discouraged many processors and retailers from involvement in the sector (e.g. MAF 1996, 12; MAF 2005, 19). Moreover, for farmers, converting to organic livestock production implies increased production costs. The production level of animals can decrease and organic farming can require certain building investments (due to e.g. outdoor runs and larger locomotion areas), the usage of relatively expensive organic feedstuffs and more labour time in animal management (e.g.

Koikkalainen & Haataja 2000, 43, 45–46). Likewise, markets for farming inputs have developed rather slowly, so that the availability of organic feedstuffs, particularly protein feedstuffs, and organic young animals have been limited, which has increased their prices. Price premiums have not often covered the extra production costs (Koikkalainen & Haataja 2000, 43–44), and this was not addressed in agricultural support policies before 2005 when the organic livestock production support was introduced. Since the introduction of the support scheme, organic livestock production has started increasing, and it remains to be seen whether a somewhat more favourable economic environment helps boosting organic livestock farming further.

3.4 Animal welfare in organic farming

The welfare benefits resulting from organic farming are a contested issue: while some may maintain that organic farming is in no way better than conventional farming in terms of animal welfare, and may even pose new risks to animal welfare (e.g. inflicting animals to adverse weather conditions), others may argue that although organic farming does bring animal welfare improvements, too many compromises have been made to animal welfare standards for economic reasons. These diverging views are based upon different understandings of animal welfare. If we look at the scientific research into animal welfare, it becomes quite clear that the evaluation of the possible welfare benefits of organic farming presents a highly complex issue: in different studies conflicting results can be gained since dissimilar definitions of animal welfare and different kinds of measurement methods can be used (comp. Hovi et al. 2003; Sundrum 2001, 47–48). Moreover, organic farming systems and conventional farming systems can have also a high internal variation: in both systems, some farmers may put lots of effort into promoting the welfare of animals at the farm, while other farmers may be less motivated or lack the skills to improve the animal welfare situation (comp. *ibid.*). Currently, the comparison of the welfare status of animals in organic farms and in conventional farms can be based only on the comparison between animal welfare standards since the data on actual animal welfare status in organic farms is highly limited (see Hovi et al. 2003, 47–48). Surely, the analysis of standards can tell only half of the story because standards cannot fully cover such issues as the skills and attitudes of the stockperson, feeding patterns and the hygienic situation at the farm (comp. Sundrum 2001, 212).

Despite these reservations, by analysing standards we can at least evaluate which kinds of practices are allowed in both systems at the basic level. When we compare the organic standards (EVIRA's Organic livestock production guidelines) and legal minimum requirements (Animal Welfare Act and

Decree and the decrees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry) in Finland, we can note that organic livestock production standards exceed clearly in many instances the minimum requirements of the animal protection legislation (see table 3). For instance, cages are banned in poultry and pig production, loose housing systems are required for cattle (although with some exceptions), outdoor access is generally mandatory for all animals, fully slatted or grid floors are prohibited and locomotion areas tend to be larger than stated in legal animal welfare regulations. Moreover, organic livestock farms are inspected annually, while conventional livestock farms are inspected much more rarely – mainly only when there are reasons to doubt that animal welfare regulations are violated at the farm.

Table 3. Animal welfare requirements in organic livestock production standards that exceed the minimum legal requirements of the Finnish animal welfare regulations.

Laying hens

- Cages for laying hens are banned
- More space (5 hens /m² vs. 9 hens /m² in conventional deep litter systems)
- Outdoor access required during summer (from May to October); also rather large outdoor run area – 4m² /hen
- More nest space (e.g. 5 hens /individual nest vs. 7 hens /individual nest in conventional deep litter systems)

Pigs

- Cages banned
- Some roughage have to be given daily
- Fully grid floors prohibited (solid floor min. 50 percent from the floor area)
- More space (the space of fattening pigs is about double of the space required in legal minimum standards)
- Outdoor access during summer required to sows and boars, and from 2011 onwards also to fattening pigs

Cattle

- Minimum ratio of roughage (mainly 60 percent from feedstuffs)
- Free calving (in conventional farming cows can calve while tethered)
- Group pens required for calves over one week old (in legal minimum standards over eight weeks old)
- Natural milk to calves for three months
- Pasture required during summer, except bulls can be kept in open air exercise areas or open air runs (in conventional farming outdoor run (not pasture) is required only to cows and heifers that are kept tethered during winter)
- Loose housing systems required, except in “small holdings” (which is defined currently as 30 animal units) and until 2011 in barns built before 24/8/2000. In tethering systems animals should have an outdoor access twice a week during winter period.
- Fully slatted floors prohibited; at least half of the total floor area must be solid and ample dry bedding required in the resting areas.

Sources:

Council Regulation (EC) 1804/1999; EVIRA (2007c); MAF (2003a); MAF (2003b); MAF (2004); The Finnish Government Decree concerning the change in animal protection decree (171/2005).

However, there are also several deficiencies in animal welfare requirements in organic standards. Organic standards include several compromises between the natural behaviour of animals and the economic interests of farming enterprises (comp. Waiblinger et al. 2004, 122–123, 145). For instance, pigs do not roam in large pastures during summer, but a pig of 110 kg can have only one square metre of outdoor space (when the pig has a free access to the outdoor area from the animal shed). In addition, cows can be tethered in smallholdings, which clearly prevents animals to have regular exercise and to perform many aspects of their species-specific behaviour, such as social behaviour. Moreover, a highly debated question is the maximum flock size of laying hens. Currently, in egg production, the flock size can be as big as 3000 hens, while in natural settings hens form much smaller flocks, consisting only of 4–6 females and a rooster (Waiblinger et al. 2004, 140, 142). Furthermore, certain problematic mutilations are allowed in organic farming: piglets can be castrated and calves can be dehorned without anaesthesia (see the review of mutilations in organic farming in Menke et al. 2004). In addition, in dairy production calves can be weaned from their mothers immediately after their birth.⁸ (See an extensive review on the possibilities of animals to perform their species specific behaviour in organic farming systems in Waiblinger et al. 2004.)

A central aspect of animal welfare is also the physical healthiness of animals. As noted in section 3.1, the health is a central value in organic farming, and preventive healthcare in livestock production is an important principle. Certainly, organic standards set some important rules that may contribute to the improved health status of animals. For instance, increased possibilities for exercise, lower stocking densities, the prohibition of fully slatted floors as well as the provision of ample bedding and roughage have been viewed to bring health benefits to animals (see e.g. Hovi et al. 2003, 43). However, there have been also some concerns that organic farming may pose certain health risks to animals. It has been suggested that free-range conditions can lead to increased injuries and parasite infections in animals, that animals can be kept outdoors in adverse weather conditions, that hens can be more prone to cannibalism and feather-pecking (because of e.g. free-range conditions and protein deficiencies in feeding) and that animals may suffer from certain nutrient deficiencies due to the reliance on home-grown feedstuffs and due to certain restrictions in feeding (e.g. disallowing synthetic amino acids) (see e.g. Hovi et al. 2003, 42–47). Similarly, there have been concerns that extended withholding periods for medicines and limitations in the maximum amount of antibiotic treatments in organic farming may lead to inadequate veterinary treatment of animals (ibid. 49).

⁸ The source for animal welfare standards in this paragraph is EVIRA's (2007c) organic livestock production guidelines.

However, in their extensive review of studies concerning the health and welfare of organic animals, veterinary scientist Malla Hovi and colleagues (2003) concluded that, although the research data on the animal health in organic farming is still quite limited, there is little evidence to propose that organic farming practices would pose important health risks to animals. Nevertheless, it seems that organic farming does create new kinds of challenges in animal management to prevent certain health risks that this new kind of animal farming system may generate. For instance, parasite control requires new kinds of animal management strategies (such as efficient pasture rotations) since the usage of the antiparasite agents is restricted in organic farming (ibid. 43–47). Similarly, special attention is needed to secure an adequate intake of all amino-acids in the feeding of poultry and pigs (ibid. 45). Likewise, the outdoor access of animals requires strategies to minimise injuries and to protect animals from adverse weather conditions. Moreover, controlling feather pecking and cannibalism in organic hen farming requires new animal management practices, such as the selection of breeds suited better to free range conditions, smaller flock sizes and improved nest designs (Hovi et al. 2003, 46–47; Menke et al. 2004, 174).

3.5 Ideological and market-oriented approaches in organic farming

Recent years have witnessed an expansion in the organic farming sector, its increased adoption in the commercial mainstream and its normalisation and institutionalisation. To put it bluntly, organic farming has been transformed from a movement to an industry: commercially oriented actors, including mainstream retailers and food manufacturers, have entered into the field, which was previously dominated by pioneering movement actors. Likewise, the governmental involvement in the sector has increased, and governments have started regulating the standards-setting, inspection and certification of organic farming. On the one hand, these trends can be viewed as representing a success story of organic farming: the relatively large-scale conversion of conventional farms to organic farming can extend the benefits of organic farming more widely in the farming industry and lead to substantive improvements in animal welfare and environmental protection in agriculture in general (comp. Best 2008, 95–96). On the other hand, however, there have been some concerns that the commercialisation and institutionalisation of the sector have implied that the original ideas of organic farming are being undermined and that organic farming is losing its capacity to challenge the conventional food system. This concern has been often labelled as a “conventionalisation thesis”, according to which organic farming is becoming “conventionalised”, at least in certain areas and in certain lines of production, i.e. it has started increasingly resembling in many ways

conventional agriculture and losing its distinctive, alternative character and its capacity to realise its environmental, health, animal welfare and social justice values.

In this section I review the discussion concerning the growing business and governmental involvement in the organic sector. I firstly discuss differences between “pioneering farmers” and “boom-time farmers”, noting that more market-oriented farmers have entered into the sector. After this, I examine the broader question of “conventionalisation”, analysing various empirical trends it has been associated with. Finally, I explore the implications of the increasing commercialisation and governmentalisation of the sector at the more organisational and political level, analysing changes in organic farming certification and standards-setting activities.

3.5.1 Pioneering farmers and new farmers

It has been well documented that from the mid-1990s new, more market-oriented farmers have entered into the organic field, previously dominated by pioneering movement-oriented farmers. Pioneering farmers tend to be “back-to-the-landers” who have lacked previous experience in farming. Their farms are typically rather small and highly mixed, producing a wide range of products, and they often practise artisanal on-farm processing as well as direct marketing, selling to local markets. (Best 2008; Mononen 2008, 86, 98–101, 104, 109–110; Susiluoma 1993, 15–20.) In contrast, new farmers have more often converted from conventional farming to organic farming and thus, having been professional farmers previously, their farms tend to be larger and more specialised than those of pioneering farmers. They typically sell their products to large retailers and manufacturers and have rather little direct contact with consumers. (Mononen 2008, 122, 126, 129–130; Padel 2001, 45; Susiluoma 1993, 15–20.)

Similarly, pioneering farmers and new farmers tend to have somewhat different reasons for converting to organic farming. For pioneering farmers, motives for conversion are often highly ideological. They may have been back-to-the-landers who have started organic farming to seek for a new way of living and to produce healthy food for themselves and their family. They may also have been farmers who have been concerned for the deterioration in the health of the soil and the livestock when practicing conventional farming and who have felt a strong distaste toward using “poisons” in their farming practices. In contrast, new farmers have tended to place more emphasis on economic reasons for conversion than pioneering farmers: organic farming subsidies and price premiums as well as declined costs in the usage of farming inputs have made organic farming financially more attractive to these farmers. (Darnhofer et al. 2005, 48; Flaten et al. 2006, 177–179;

Hall & Mogyorodý 2001, 401, 414–417; Kallio 1998, 40, 110–112; Luoto et al. 1996, 67–70; Michelsen 2001, 74–76; Mononen 2008, 86–89, 104–106, 121–125; Padel 2001, 46–47; Susiluoma 1993, 40–42.)

However, we should be cautious not to exaggerate the ideological differences between pioneering farmers and new farmers. Although new farmers tend to emphasise more economic or professional motives, these farmers seem to still regard also environmental and ethical benefits of organic farming as important reasons for conversion and their environmental attitudes still seem to differ from those of conventional farmers (Best 2008, 101; Flaten et al. 2006, 177–181; Hall & Mogyorodý 2001, 401, 414–417; Kallio 1998, 112; Michelsen 2001, 74–76; Mononen 2008, 122–123; Susiluoma 1993, 41–44). Likewise, it seems that many ex conventional farmers go through a certain kind of attitudinal change when they practice organic farming and become influenced by organic farming ideas through training and personal contacts (Hall & Mogyorodý 2001, 419–420). It may be the case that since the pool of new farmers is larger than the pool of the pioneering ones, there appears to be a larger variation in the orientations of new organic farmers: while some emphasise environmental and ethical values, others may have entered into the sector almost solely because of business motives (comp. Best 2008, 101–102; Mononen 2008, 121–125).

Organic livestock farmers' attitudes toward animal welfare seem to follow similar trends as the ideological orientations of organic farmers in general, although thus far there have only been a few empirical studies on this topic. In a survey study among Swedish organic livestock farmers ($n = 433$), new farmers tended to regard natural behaviour as less important than pioneering farmers, and they tended to be more critical toward organic standards and to have a more positive attitude to invasive technologies (e.g. embryo transfer and castration) (Lund et al. 2004b, 172–176). Similarly, a survey study ($n = 161$) among Norwegian organic dairy producers identified important differences in attitudes and husbandry practices between pioneering and new organic dairy producers.

Pioneering farmers emphasised more the soil fertility, pollution problems and ideological issues as their motives for conversion, while late converters emphasised more professional challenges, profitability and organic farming subsidies. Also, cows were given more concentrates in new organic farms, and perhaps because of this, the milk yield per cow was higher. Likewise, in these farms, the replacement rate of cows and the amount of registered disease treatments per cow were higher than in pioneering farms. However, although new farmers tended to have a more productivist approach in the animal husbandry than pioneering farmers, they still tended to differ from their conventional counterparts. The milk yield in these farms was still low compared to the overall

average of the Norwegian dairy industry; and food quality, animal welfare and health issues had still an important place in new farmers' motives for conversion, although they did not appear the most important reasons. (Flatén et al. 2006.)

In Finland, the structure of organic livestock production as well as organic livestock producers' animal management practices and attitudes to animal welfare have not been subjected to any extensive research, so it is not possible to make any conclusions whether there are significant differences among new and old organic *livestock* producers in Finland. However, since there have been studies on organic farmers in *general* (both crop and livestock producers), as noted above (Kallio 1998; Luoto et al. 1996; Mononen 2008; Susiluoma 1993), it is possible to say at least that new organic farmers in general tend to be more market-oriented also in Finland.

3.5.2 Conventionalisation debate

In organic farming studies it has been discussed whether and to which extent organic farming is becoming “conventionalised” when it is expanding and commercialising. Conventionalisation is a broader issue than the dissimilarities between pioneering and new farmers: it includes references to the agricultural structure and to the organisation of food chains more widely, and the entrance of business-oriented large-scale farmers is considered only one trend of conventionalisation. The issue of conventionalisation has been analysed mainly from the political economy perspective.

The concept of conventionalisation has been defined in somewhat different ways by different authors, but in general terms it refers to a tendency of organic agriculture to resemble increasingly conventional farming and to lose its distinctive, alternative character (Buck et al. 1997; Hall & Moggyorody 2001, 399; Lockie & Halpin 2005, 284–285). For instance, according to Lockie and Halpin (2005, 284–285) conventionalisation refers to “a process through which organic agriculture comes increasingly, as it grows, to resemble in structure and ideology the mainstream food sector it was established in opposition to.” Conventionalisation has been associated with a diversity of empirical trends: the entering of large agribusiness corporations into the organic sector, capturing growing amounts of power and profits in the input, processing and retailing markets; increasingly de-localised marketing channels; the converting of large, highly specialised, mechanised and capitalised conventional farms into organic farming, mainly just substituting chemical inputs to biological inputs, but otherwise following modestly the agroecological principles of organic farming; and the out-competing of more committed small organic farms from the wholesale markets by large organic farms or forcing them to adopt more conventional farming practices in order to stay

in the markets (Best 2008; Buck et al. 1997; Coombes & Campbell 1998; Guptill 2008; Guthman 2000; Guthman 2004b; Hall & Mogyorodý 2001; Lockie & Halpin 2005).

In organic farming studies, diverging levels of conventionalisation trends have been identified in different regional areas. Geographer Daniel Buck and colleagues (1997) (whose article first introduced the conventionalisation thesis) and geographer Julie Guthman (2000; 2004a; 2004b) have identified a number of conventionalisation tendencies in Californian organic fruit and vegetable production, such as high agribusiness involvement in the organic food chains and the entering of highly specialised and large-scale organic farms to the sector, partly outcompeting smaller farms from the wholesale markets. However, studies on other regions have given a more contradictory picture. For instance, in an analysis of the organic sector in New Zealand, it was noted that more committed forms of organic farming can exist alongside with highly commercialised organic farming (Coombes & Campbell 1998). The high agribusiness involvement in New Zealand's export-oriented organic production has not marginalised small organic growers that produce to domestic markets since agribusiness firms can produce economically only a limited range of products that are suited to large scale agricultural production (*ibid.*). Similarly, in a study of the organic sector in Ontario, Canada, it was found very little evidence of conventionalisation in organic fruit and vegetable farming, while some conventionalisation tendencies were identified in field crop farming (for instance, these farms tended to be larger, more mechanised, specialised and capitalised than organic fruit and vegetable farms) (Hall & Mogyorodý 2001). In a study on Australian organic farming, not much evidence of conventionalisation was found: for instance, export markets for Australian organic products appeared rather minor, and an important proportion of organic products were sold directly to consumers (Lockie & Halpin 2005). Finally, in his study on the organic sector in West Germany, sociologist Henning Best (2008) identified some tendencies towards the conventionalisation of organic farming, such as the entering of large and more specialised farms to the sector, but he also noted that some trends do not suggest conventionalisation; for instance he did not find any evidence that early adopters were forced to change their farming practices because of competition pressures from large-scale farms.

The discussion on the conventionalisation of organic farming has tended to focus on organic plant production, but recently livestock production has also started receiving some research attention. It has been noted that one indication of conventionalisation is the growing tendency to specialise in crop production without livestock or even without owning any grassland (Best 2008, 100; Hall & Mogyorodý 2001, 407). Farms without livestock may have a smaller crop diversity, use crop

rotations only in a limited way and rely more on bought-in fertilising inputs (Hall & Moggyorody 2001, 407–408). Moreover, very large operators have entered into the organic livestock production sector in some countries. For instance, according to Best (2008, 100), in West Germany nowadays organic pig farms can produce over 1,000 pigs annually and poultry farms over 10,000 chickens – one producing as much as 150,000 chickens. As Best (*ibid.*) notes, “organic farms raising livestock and poultry on such scales are far from the ideal-typical mixed organic agriculture and closely mirror the conventional large-scale production of agricultural commodities.” Similarly, in the USA today there are some corporate-owned “large industrial-style organic livestock dairies” which operate with thousands of cows (Guptill 2008, 35).

In her study on the organic dairy industry in upstate New York, sociologist Amy Guptill (2008) made contradictory findings: whilst some trends indicate growing conventionalisation in the organic dairy industry, other trends suggest an increasing divergence from the conventional model. Firstly, as regards to conventionalisation trends, some corporate-owned mega-size dairy farms have entered into the sector, taking advantage of certain loopholes in organic farming standards. These farms do not feed animals with pasture, but cows are kept only in outdoor runs and fed in bunkers. Similarly, they buy conventionally raised heifers, while family-scale dairy farms typically raise their cows by themselves using organic methods from birth. However, Guptill also noted that some producers have not responded to competitive pressures in the organic sector by intensifying production, but “by going deeper into the alternative organic model” (p. 29). For instance, some dairy farmers have responded to increasing grain prices, not by intensifying, but by increasingly making use of their own grazing lands to feed their herd, hence relying more on the on-farm sources. Similarly, some farmers have increasingly adopted cattle breeds or strains that can utilise well the pasture, rather than needing intensive grain-feeding.

In Finland, the possible conventionalisation of the Finnish organic sector has not been subjected to any empirical research (comp. Mononen 2008, 150). Research has focused only on the attitudes and motives of organic farmers, and based on these studies, it is possible to say that new farmers tend to be more market-oriented than pioneering farmers, as noted in section 3.5.1. Moreover, based on statistical data it is possible to note that the average size of organic farms has increased (see section 3.3), but they still tend to be rather small. For instance, the average size of organic dairy farms is 31 cows /farm and the average size of organic pig farms is 156 fattening pigs /farm (EVIRA 2007b). Since only average figures are available, it is not possible to review whether any large livestock producing farms have entered into the organic sector. Yet, organic poultry production proves to be

an exception here. The average size of organic henneries is nowadays 2,228 hens /farm (EVIRA 2007b), and the largest organic hen farms include 14,000 and 9,000 hens respectively (Heikkilä, 14/1/2009). However, due to the lack of research data, it is not possible to say what the large unit sizes in hen farming have implied in terms of animal husbandry practices, animal welfare and the usage of external inputs in hen farming. True, it appears that hen farms on average are using a significant proportion of bought-in feedstuffs – about 35–40 percent of the total feedstuffs consumed at the farm (this can include also imported feedstuffs, such as maize gluten and soy) (Heikkilä, 15/4/2009). However, since only average figures are available, it is not possible to say whether large henneries are relying more on bought-in feedstuffs than smaller henneries. In addition, I have not found any information about the usage of bought-in feedstuffs in the other livestock production sectors in Finland.

Recently, the concept of “conventionalisation” has been increasingly subjected to criticism. Firstly, it has been questioned whether “conventional farming”, as an oppositional pole to organic farming, can be treated as a single coherent category since there is also a diversity of approaches within conventional farming (Rosin & Campbell 2009). Moreover, as the structure of conventional farming varies between countries, “conventionalisation” would also mean different things in different countries. For instance Best (2008, 103–104) has noted that in West-Germany conventionalisation could not mean a similar kind of industrialisation and agribusiness involvement as in California (which has become the most exemplar case in the conventionalisation debate). While in California the whole farming sector is highly industrialised, in West-Germany the most of the conventional farms are still small, privately owned family farms with a low capital expenditure. This applies of course also to Finland.

Secondly, it seems that the concept of conventionalisation constructs a simple dualistic and binary picture about the organic farming sector (deep–shallow, small–large, artisanal–industrial, lifestyle–commercial etc.), ignoring all the heterogeneity, complexity and contingencies within the sector. Organic farmers can choose a diversity of pathways when the organic farming sector changes and they can have a multiplicity of orientations toward farming, but the concept of conventionalisation cannot capture all this diversity because of its simple dualistic approach. (Lockie & Halpin 2005, 304–305; Rosin & Campbell 2009.)

Thirdly, it is highly contested which changes in organic farming can be interpreted as happening, in Best’s (2008, 104) words, “within the organic paradigm”, and which changes undermine the

important values of organic farming, so that the capacity of organic farming to “make a difference” starts to degenerate. In other words, the distinction between “organic” and “conventional” is highly contested, and there is a diversity of interpretations of these distinctions within organic the sector. For instance, many changes that have brought organic farming to the commercial mainstream can be viewed positively as improving the overall environmental protection and animal welfare situation in agriculture (comp. Best 2008, 96). To illustrate, the question of local vs. non-local marketing is a contested issue in the organic sector: while some movement members put much value to highly localised food chains, others view that organic products should be available in normal supermarkets at rather moderate prices, so that “ordinary people” would buy organic products, removing the “elite” or “luxury” status from organic products, and in this way helping to expand the sector (Guthman 2004a, 169; Klintman & Boström 2004, 621–622; Mononen 2008, 98, 126, 130).

Due to the contested character of the meaning of organic farming and organic/conventional distinctions, it would be important to explore in more detail as to how these meanings and distinctions are constructed in the organic sector. Since the research field has been dominated quite much by political economy perspectives, the construction of the meanings of organic farming has been studied quite little from sociological perspectives. However, recent years have witnessed a growing research interest in examining political discourses concerning organic farming and in particular in analysing the construction of the meaning of “organics” in the standards-setting arena, which has become the key field in defining the meaning of organic farming. Therefore, I now turn to explore the literature concerning the political discourses on organic farming in standards-setting and certification activities.

3.5.3 Movement–industry tensions in organic standards and certification

As the organic farming sector has developed, standards-setting has become the core arena in which the meaning of organic farming is defined: standards have become increasingly elaborate and detailed and they control with sanctions (e.g. giving an access to organic price premiums) whether a certain practice applied at the farm can be defined as “organic” or not (comp. Campbell & Liepins 2001, 26–27; Michelsen 2001, 66–68). Similarly, certification⁹ and inspection activities, in which an interpretation is given as to whether a certain farming practices follow these standards, have become increasingly professionalised and institutionalised. In this section, I aim to demonstrate that as

⁹ Certification refers to a procedure in which a certifying body gives a written assurance that a production process has been assessed, so that it can be verified that certain products conform to certain requirements (i.e. it can be verified that a product conforms with the organic standards of the certifying body) (IFOAM 2006, 10).

business and governmental actors have become increasingly involved in standards-setting and certification activities, movement-oriented farmers have become more marginalised in these fields.

Initially, the concept of organic farming was mainly defined and developed by a relatively small number of growers and movement members, and the definition of “organic” was not yet based on a certain standard but on an agreement between the seller and the buyer, rooted in the direct contact and personal trust between them (Campbell & Liepins 2001, 27–28; Lockeretz & Lund 2003, 202). However, when the sector started to expand and the distance between producers and consumers started to increase in the 1970s, standards began to be developed to provide better guarantees for consumers regarding the organic quality of the products, to ensure fair competition among organic farmers and to protect them from fraudulent marketing (Boström & Klintman 2006, 168; Campbell & Liepins 2001, 28–29; Guthman 1998, 141–142; Guthman 2004a, 112–113). These standards were firstly developed by farmer-driven organic farming organisations in highly participatory and informal processes, and standards were rather short and imprecise, leaving considerable interpretation power to inspectors, who were typically volunteering movement-members (Campbell & Liepins 2001, 29–30; Guthman 2004a, 112–113, 121; Michelsen 2001, 70). These kinds of informal certification practices implied that there were still multiple notions of organic farming in the sector and that standards-setting organisations did not have any hegemonic status in defining the meaning of organics (Campbell & Liepins 2001, 30).

However, certification schemes became increasingly formalised and professionalised in response to the growth and commercialisation of the sector. New actors in addition to the previous farmer-driven organic farming organisations were included in the standards-setting and certification processes, such as food manufacturing and retailing actors as well as environmental and animal welfare NGOs (Boström & Klintman 2006, 168; Campbell & Liepins 2001, 30–32). Standards-setting and certification organisations have developed from movement organisations to professionalised certification agencies that serve clients. Likewise, standards have developed from short and vague papers to increasingly elaborate, detailed and technically precise papers. This has implied that gradually a certain single meaning of organic farming was being established and codified out of competing meanings. (Campbell & Liepins 2001, 30–32; Guthman 2004a, 121.)

Also governments have become increasingly involved in setting organic standards and in organic certification schemes in order to create more uniformity in organic markets and to harmonise organic certification schemes, which would help to facilitate both national and international trade

(Boström & Klintman 2006, 171). For instance, in the EU, the Council Regulation (EEC) 2092/91 on organic production was created in 1991 and in the US the federal organic standards (National Organic Programme, NOP) was introduced in 2002. The involvement of the governments in standards-setting processes has also implied that the creating of organic standards has become a highly political process: for instance requirements in the Council Regulation are an outcome of lengthy negotiations with a diversity of interest groups, such as consumers, farmers, retailers, food manufacturing companies as well as environmental and animal welfare organisations (comp. Klintman & Boström 2004, 613).

It has been argued that this growing codification process of organic farming has implied that standards have started to focus on inputs rather than on complex farming processes, and this in turn has enabled agribusiness firms and large farming enterprises to enter into the sector (Guthman 2004b, 111, 117–118). According to Guthman (*ibid.*), the definition of organic agriculture has become increasingly narrow as the regulation of the sector has increased, so that many broad ideas of the organic movement concerning for instance localised production and labour relations have not been included in the standards. As she writes (*ibid.* 111),

[D]rive for regulatory legislation effectively subsumed much of the organic movement into an organic industry. – – In the process of codification, many of the more radical goals associated with organics were sacrificed. Broader meanings were narrowed to technical terms.

Guthman argues that there is something in the nature of the regulation that is unreceptive to the multifaceted ideals of organic farming: it is difficult to include broad and complex ideals of organic farming to a single standard that must be enforceable, measurable and verifiable. Hence, the list of allowed inputs, which is easier to regulate and inspect than farming processes, started to become “the crux of organic regulation”. (*Ibid.* 117–122.) It is easy to see that the process orientation was enforced more effectively in the early movement-driven certification schemes. The inspection was typically carried out by committed movement members who had a considerable interpretation power due to short and imprecise standards (Campbell & Liepins 2001, 29–30; Guthman 2004a, 112–113, 121). These inspectors showed much interest as to whether the farmers actually practiced certain organic principles and were not just simply following the letter of the standards (comp. Guthman 2004a, 121). Likewise, inspectors also gave advice to farmers, which was a way to ensure that they followed certain organic principles. In Finland, when the government started to carry out inspection, the practice of advising during the inspection started gradually to decline since this was viewed as

disqualifying the inspector and unnecessarily to consume the resources of the inspection body. (Seppänen & Helenius 2004, 1–3.)

It also seems that when a larger amount of players than merely movement actors have become involved in standards-setting, certain important compromises have been included in standards, and these have allowed agribusiness and large farming enterprises to enter into the field practising organic farming in “shallower” ways. For instance, Guthman (2004a, 118–120, 124–125, 134) has described how in California the influence of the large scale business-oriented farmers increased in certification agencies. Initially, among mixed farmers, who had both conventional and organic operations, a Californian certifying agency CCOF was viewed as a “puritanist”, more “lifestyle- than business-oriented” organisation, run by “hippies, theologians and philosophers” or by “gardeners, not farmers” (p. 134). However, when increasing amounts of conventional farmers converted to organic farming, their representation increased in CCOF. Consequently, due to the interests of certain farmer groups, CCOF did not set any rules concerning for instance localised food distribution, the maximum sizes of organic farms and the working conditions of labour.

Also sociologists Magnus Boström and Mikael Klintman (2006, 170–171) have noted that the business actors have come increasingly to dominate the certification of organic farming in Sweden. Initially, the Swedish certification organisation KRAV was much under the control of the Swedish Ecological Farmers, but as the Swedish organic farming sector expanded, wealthier retailing and manufacturing organisations became the formal members of KRAV. Currently, due to the important position of business actors in KRAV, certain structural issues, such as small-scale and local production, are not raised to the KRAV’s agenda on organic standards. As Boström and Klintman write, “The business side has prevented the questioning of several sub-themes relevant to sustainable agriculture” and certain themes are “defined out” of KRAV’s agenda (p. 171).

It has been argued that the increasing governmental and business involvement in organic certification has implied that the organic movement has become increasingly weaker in defining the meaning of organic farming. For instance, Boström and Klintman (2006, 172–173) have documented extensively how there was much conflict in the US between the organic movement and the federal government when the federal organic standards were being created. In particular, a highly contested issue was the government’s suggestion to include “the Big Three” – the usage of genetically modified organisms, irradiation and sewage sludge – in the federal organic standard, which received a widespread public opposition, leading the US Department of Agriculture to

withdraw its proposal. It seems that the federal government has “taken considerable control over issues of definition” (p. 173) in organic farming, and the organic farming movement needs to put much effort to fight for the inclusion of certain fundamental principles of organic farming in governmental standards (see also Guthman 2004a, 116).

Likewise, according to political scientist Johannes Michelsen (2001), in Denmark the power of the organic movement has declined as the government has started increasingly to regulate the organic sector. As he writes, “organic farming associations have indeed lost full control over production standards” (p. 80). A governmental inspection system and organic label were introduced in the late 1980s, but initially the national organic farming organisation (LØJ) still continued to have a strong position in the defining the meaning of organic farming, since the governmental standards were mainly based on LØJ’s standards and the organic movement was included in the committee developing governmental standards. However, LØJ’s position began to weaken after the Council Regulation on organic production was enforced in Denmark in 1993. From this point government began to rely more on the EU as a source of knowledge rather than LØJ. At the same time, organic farmers started abandoning LØJ’s certification, moving solely to the governmental certification.

It seems some of the movement-oriented organic farmers have begun to exit from the formal, business-oriented and governmentalised organic certification system since they find that they have lost their ability to influence in organic standards and that these standards have diverged too much from the original organic principles (Campbell & Liepins 2001, 35; Guthman 2004a, 170–171). For instance, according to anthropologist Hugh Campbell and geographer Ruth Liepins (2001, 35), in New Zealand, previously movement farmers were key actors in developing organic standards, but when the export industry entered into the sector and started collaborating with the country’s major certification agency Bio-Gro, the industry actors began to displace movement actors from the certification activities. Pioneering farmers “have felt progressively marginalized and unable to speak within their own industry”. They have started exiting from the Bio-Gro certification, and in its place they have moved back into the uncertified organic production, selling their products directly to consumers, or become involved in a new certification scheme that is more strongly connected with the grassroots movement. Likewise, according to Guthman (2004a, 170–171), in California radical movement members have not viewed positively the California’s certification agency CCOF’s growing collaboration with large scale mixed organic farms and the increasing power of the Department of Agriculture in defining the meaning of organic farming. These farmers have been leaving the formal organic sector, trying to find new kinds of alternative schemes in order to

“recover some of the organic movement from the organic industry” (p. 171). For instance, they may have switched to biodynamic certification, which is still a strongly movement-driven scheme, or they have become involved with other certification programmes that include certain additional rules to the mainstream standards.

To conclude, studies concerning standards-setting and certification activities have well documented the increasing business orientation in these fields. Large-scale market-oriented farmers or large retailers and manufacturers have become increasingly powerful agents, while movement oriented farmers have become more and more marginalised. Moreover, the increasing governmental involvement in the regulation of organic farming has implied that the power of movement actors to define the meaning of organic farming has declined. However, the studies on organic standards-setting activities have tended to focus on the plant side of organic production, while less attention has been given to the construction of livestock production standards. There is virtually no study how the meaning of animal welfare is constructed in the standards-setting discourses. This is an important omission since the standards-setting is a key arena in which the meaning of organic farming is defined. In particular, there is a need to study how the growing business orientation, identified in the studies on general organic standards, may have been reflected in the discussion on animal welfare standards.

In Finland, standards-setting and certification activities have not been subjected to any social scientific research. However, it can be assumed that the power of the organic movement to define standards has also declined in Finland since the government has assumed control of standard-setting, inspection and certification activities, and FAOF's private standard regime has almost ceased to exist. As there is no research in this area, this assumption requires further investigation. Therefore, in order to analyse the construction of animal welfare standards in Finnish organic production, there is a need to investigate further the relationship between the government and the organic farming movement in the setting of organic standards.

4 Theoretical and methodological approach

4.1 Research objectives

In the previous sections I have noted how organic animal farming has been an important alternative livestock production system that has attempted to respond to the growing public concern for farm animal welfare. Moreover, I have noted that alternative livestock production schemes, including organic farming, have received only a minimal attention in human–animal studies, despite their growing importance in offering resolutions to increasing ambiguities in people’s attitudes to farm animals. Likewise, despite the contested nature of the concept of animal welfare, there has been a highly limited sociological attention as to how meanings of animal welfare have been produced in the organic sector.

Likewise, I have noted that as organic farming has been expanding, business-oriented farmers, mainstream retailers and manufacturers as well as governmental actors have entered the field. The growing involvement of governmental and business actors has created some tensions between ideological and market orientations in the sector. There has been an increasing amount of research concerning these issues and the possible “conventionalisation” of organic farming sector. However, the discussion on conventionalisation and business–movement tensions in organic farming studies has tended to focus on organic crop production, while less attention has been given to organic livestock production and particularly to animal welfare issues. Moreover, these studies have tended to be based on political economy perspectives, which have tended to take the concepts of “conventional” and “organic” as given, without paying much attention on how the meanings of these concepts are contested and constantly negotiated in social practices. In particular, little attention has been given on how the meanings of organic livestock production are produced, reproduced and contested in the organic sector.

Therefore, I was interested in continuing a line of research in which there is an interest to study how the cultural interpretations of organic farming are created in the sector. Since standards-setting has become the key arena in which the meaning of organic farming is defined, I became interested in exploring what kinds of implications the growing business and governmental involvement in the standards-setting field may have implied to the construction of the meaning of organic farming. Studies in this area have well concluded that business and governmental players have tended to displace movement-oriented farmers in the standards-setting and certification activities, so that

power of movement-actors in the defining the meaning of organic farming has declined. However, these studies have given little attention to the livestock side of organic production; there is virtually no study as to how the meaning of animal welfare is constructed in standards discourses. Therefore, in this research I wish to pursue the constructionist discussion in order to explore the tensions existing between ideological and market concepts of animal welfare in the standards-setting discourses.

Finland appears to provide an interesting setting to analyse these issues since it belongs to those few countries in which the government has started to maintain organic standards and carry out inspection and certification. In Finland, prior to the governmental involvement, Finnish Association for Organic Farming (FAOF) maintained organic standards and performed inspection and certification of organic farming. Hence, I became interested in how FAOF had responded to the growing governmental importance in the standards-setting field. Moreover, FAOF also appeared to provide an interesting context to analyse the tensions between market-oriented and movement-oriented actors in the organic field. Organic farmers' organisations are not consumers' organisations that could easily insist "ideological purity" in the organic sector without needing to take into account the economic realities of farming, but neither are they pure interest groups for farming enterprises that would approach organic farming solely as a business area. Rather, they are organisations that represent a heterogeneous group of farmers who have diverse reasons to practice organic farming and who include both ideologically and business oriented farmers. Obviously, organic farming organisations have needed to respond to the transformations in the organic field and to the growing entry of more business oriented farmers to the sector.

So, I took FAOF as my case to study how the meanings of animal welfare are constructed in organic farming and what the growing governmental and business involvement in the organic sector has implied to this meaning construction. FAOF is a key player in the construction of the meaning of organic farming in public discussion, policy making field and in the standards-setting activities in Finland. It is the only general nation-wide organic farming society, representing organic farmers in the public arena, and it also importantly influence in organic farmers' attitudes and practices through advisory, information dissemination and campaigning activities.

It is important to point out that, although I partly do utilise social movement literature in this research, this literature is not my main reference point. Certainly, FAOF would have provided an interesting case to study the relationship between the state and social movements due to the strong

governmental involvement in the regulating of organic farming in Finland (see section 5.2). However, my main interest is to study the construction of the meaning of animal welfare in standards-setting discourses, which required me to draw mainly from human–animal studies and organic farming studies literature.

I start to unfold the cultural interpretations associated to farm animal welfare by studying how *organic livestock producers' orientations toward farm animal welfare* are represented in FAOF's discourses. As I have noted, studies on organic farmers' views have indicated that organic farmers include both ideologically and market oriented farmers. In this research, I am interested in whether it is possible to identify similar kinds of distinctions in the *representations* of organic livestock producers in FAOF's discourses: *what kinds of identities are produced to organic livestock producers and how the place of animal welfare is portrayed in the motivations of these farmers to convert to organic farming*. After analysing the representations of organic livestock producers' orientation toward animal welfare, I was able to touch upon the question of standards: *what kind of positions do different actors take when talking about animal welfare standards and how do they support and justify their positions?*

I considered it important to review whether and how discourses on farm animal welfare in FAOF have changed when the organic sector has expanded and become increasingly commercialised and institutionalised. Therefore, I decided to collect longitudinal data, starting the analysis from the year 2000, which was an important year when analysing the implications of the growing governmental and business involvement in animal welfare discourses. In this year the government took over the inspection and certification of organic livestock production and also differentiated its crop production standards from FAOF's Ladybird standards (see section 5.2). Thus, from 2000 onwards, FAOF's Ladybird certification faced serious challenges; it became increasingly marginalised and consequently FAOF started redefining its role in the organic sector. All these changes – declined standards-setting in FAOF and the growing profiling of the organisation as an interest group – provided a fruitful setting to study the tensions between business, governmental and movement actors in the organic farming sector. In all likelihood it might have been good to look more retrospectively into FAOF's history, but it was not possible to include any more material in the research of this size. It would have been possible to reduce data by analysing only certain text samples (e.g. only certain samples of Luomulehti articles) in each time period, but I was not comfortable with this approach since I felt it important to have a rather detailed, in-depth and complete understanding of FAOF's discourses in the period I was analysing.

To summarise, the specific research questions of this study are the following:

- 1) How are the meanings of animal welfare in organic livestock farming constructed in FAOF's discourses?
 - Representations of organic livestock producers' orientation to animal welfare: how is the importance of animal welfare constructed in farmers' reasons to convert to organic farming and to continue practising organic farming?
 - Organic livestock production standards: What kinds of positions do actors take concerning the level of animal welfare requirements in organic standards, and how do they support, defend and justify these positions?
- 2) How has FAOF responded to the growing business orientation and governmental involvement in the organic sector? Is it possible to identify any changes in FAOF's discourses on farm animal welfare in 2000–2005?

4.2 Social constructionism

I am analysing animal welfare issues from the social constructionist perspective: I am interested in the cultural meanings concerning farm animal welfare and how these meanings are constructed in FAOF's discourses. Social constructionism is a wide theoretical-methodological framework that includes a diversity of approaches. However, despite the multiplicity of orientations, these approaches share certain basic assumptions (see Burr 2003, 2, 5). Firstly, according to the social constructionist perspective, knowledge about social reality is created, transmitted and maintained in social processes (Aittola & Raiskila 1994, 226; Burr 1995, 4). In their classic work on the social construction of knowledge, sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966, 15) note that what is "real" or a "self-evident fact" to a person in a certain culture can differ from the understandings of reality in other societies, sub-cultures or social classes, indicating that "reality" and "knowledge" are created and established in social processes. In the case of animals, this approach implies that various images of animals (e.g. animals as "production units" or as "subjective actors"), categories of animals (e.g. pet–livestock and wild–tame distinctions) and cultural meanings attached to animals (e.g. constructing animal breeding as "improvement" or "degeneration" of animals) are constantly produced and reproduced in social practices. These images of animals are produced, reinforced and legitimated for instance in scientific texts, art, everyday discussions and in NGO materials. (See e.g. Arluke & Sanders 1996, 10–18; Crist 1999; Quinn 1993; Scarce 2000.) Some of these understandings can become highly enduring, being passed from generation to generation, and appearing as widely accepted self-evident "facts" to the members of the society, rather than being produced in social and cultural processes (Arluke & Sanders 1996, 10). However, certain established meanings can be also challenged and transformed in social processes. In this

way, different understandings of animals are subjected to constant negotiation and re-negotiation. (Comp. Arluke & Sanders 1996, 10–18.)

Secondly, in the social constructionist approach, a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge is taken. The idea that knowledge is based on objective experiences of the world is challenged. (Burr 1995, 3.) It is viewed that the reality cannot be experienced as “pure”, but it is always interpreted and made meaningful through cultural filters (Jokinen 1999a, 39). Finally, social constructionism emphasises the historical and cultural specificity of categories and concepts (Burr 1995, 3–4). Indeed, philosopher Ian Hacking (1999, 2, 5–6, 12–14) notes that the “point” of social constructionism is to “raise consciousness”: these studies tend to focus on issues that have been taken for granted as “a natural order of things” in the society, that have become some kinds of reifications, so that the social forces creating them have become hidden. The basic claim is that certain social constructions are not inevitable and fixed, but instead they are historical and cultural products, the meaning of which can be contested.

The questions of truth and reality in social constructionism have been subjected to a quite intense debate (Burr 2003, 82; Irwin 2001, 162–171). Often constructionism has been accused of denying the independent existence of the reality outside discourse (e.g. Burr 2003, 81–82). However, in constructionist approaches, there are various positions related to the problem of reality, and these positions have been often classified as “mild” and “radical” constructionists or “contextual” and “strict” constructionists (Burr 2003; Heiskala 2000, 199; Irwin 2001, 162–163). In more radical forms of constructionism, no position is taken as to whether there is reality outside language (Juhila 1999). Thus, no ontological claim about the non-existence of reality is made, but rather, radical constructionism is sceptical towards any ontological claims (Burr 2003, 89–90; Irwin 2001, 168–169).

Most of the constructionist studies seem to follow the mild constructionist lines, in which it is assumed that although the reality known by humans always is interpreted and although human perceptions do not straightforwardly mirror reality, the reality does lay down restrictions about how the world can be constructed (Burr 2003, 97; Heiskala 2000, 199). Even though the relationship between ontological reality and human knowledge is complex, there is a relationship between these two: human meanings do refer to the non-discursive world and they are not independent of it, produced solely in human meaning systems (Burr 2003, 95; Juhila 1999, 164). Although non-discursive worlds do not determine human constructions, they, in social psychologist Vivien Burr’s

(2003, 96) words, “‘afford’ some constructions more readily than others” and some constructions are more likely than others. In the case of animals, this implies that the physiology and behaviour of animals can influence in and restrict the cultural interpretations of animals (comp. Aaltola 2004, 18, 253). However, although humans cannot construct natural events in arbitrary ways, there is still much space for cultural variation (Heiskala 2000, 201–202). The non-discursive world not only influences social constructions, but social constructions can also direct human action to transform the non-discursive world in a certain way (Burr 2003, 100). For instance, in the case of animals, certain discourses can maintain and legitimate certain kinds of animal management practices. As linguistic Arran Stibbe (2001, 147) puts it, “How animals are socially constructed influences how they are treated by human society”.

This research follows mild constructionist lines: I assume that physiological characters and the behaviour of animals lay down restrictions as to how animals and their welfare can be constructed. However, I am not following those forms of mild constructionist studies that evaluate the correspondence between the non-discursive world and discursive practises (see Juhila 1999), but I focus strongly on the representations of animal welfare in discourses.

4.3 Research data

This research is a case study on FAOF, or more specifically on FAOF’s discourses concerning organic livestock production and farm animal welfare. In the case study, one case is studied in detail and there is an aim to develop as complete an understanding of the case as possible (Silverman 2005, 126). Often case studies utilise multiple sources of data. This is based on the idea of data triangulation: using a diverse range of data improves the validity of a case study since the same phenomenon can be approached with multiple measures. Findings can be more accurate and convincing when they are based on several data sources. Moreover, using multiple sources of evidence helps to create a more comprehensive understanding of the case. (Yin 2003, 14, 97–101.)

Studying FAOF’s discourses provided me with diverse kinds of possibilities for data collection. Meanings of animal welfare can be constructed in various settings within the organisation: in unofficial discussions between FAOF’s employees, members, activists and leadership; in AGMs, board meetings and working group meetings; in seminars and other events which FAOF’s actors organise or attend; in FAOF’s activities with media (e.g. representing the organisation in media); in

FAOF's official statements (e.g. standards and statements to the government); in proposals by FAOF's member societies; and in FAOF's magazine *Luomulehti*.

From these data sources I decided to focus on certain FAOF's documents and *Luomulehti* magazines as well as to carry out some interviews. Selecting these types of data implies that I have not studied how meanings get constructed "in live" in the everyday talk among FAOF's actors (e.g. in unofficial encounters and in meetings). I found it sufficient to collect documentary data and interviews, instead of extensive observation, since this data range provided already a great deal of material for this study. Focusing on documentary data also gave me more resources to make a short retrospective excursion into FAOF's history and in this way to analyse changes related to business-ideology tensions. In order to make a brief investigation outside the written documents and to include some everyday discussion in this research, I carried out a few interviews with FAOF's employees and volunteers.

This research has a somewhat historical approach. I collected background documents since the foundation of the organisation in 1985, and I have used this data in describing how FAOF's role in the organic standards-setting and certification fields has changed. However, when I analysed FAOF's discourses on organic livestock production, my focus was more contemporary and I analysed data from the period of 2000–2005 (the rationale for this temporal focus is described in section 4.1). I have also focused on certain animal production lines – pork, poultry (both meat poultry and laying hens) and cattle (both beef and dairy) production, which are the main animal production lines in Finland. Excluding the more marginal production lines (e.g. bee, goats and sheep) helped to keep the material more manageable.

FAOF has an abundant pool of documents, and only a part of documents turned out to be relevant for this study. To form a general picture of FAOF's role, activities, actors and standards-setting processes, I used a wide range of data as a source for background information. Background material includes annual reports, action plans, financial statements, constitutions, committee documents and documents of annual general meeting (AGM) (see table 4). It includes also early (before 2000) FAOF's official statements, comments and proposals; early (before 2000) FAOF's organic livestock production standards; materials (e.g. minutes) of the organic livestock production standards working group (SWG) (which operated until 2000), and comments received by FAOF concerning organic livestock production standards.

A much narrower range of material turned out to be relevant when analysing the discourses concerning farm animal welfare during the period of 2000–2005. This material included FAOF’s organic livestock production standards (that were in effect in 2000), and renewed Ladybird quality standards; FAOF’s official statements concerning organic livestock production and standards in 2000–2005; materials (e.g. agendas and proposals) of the Ladybird working groups; and the comments from regional member societies concerning Ladybird certification (see table 5). FAOF’s documents represent a certain type of discourse context in which meanings of organic livestock production are constructed. Some of them (standards, official statements) represent FAOF’s “official” discourse: they are outcomes of the negotiations within the organisation and represent a certain agreement among FAOF’s actors concerning what can be said to the wider audiences about a certain topic. Some documents (Ladybird working groups’ or member societies’ proposals), in their turn, represent similar kinds of “official” accounts of certain collective actors inside FAOF. Finally, other documents (Ladybird working groups’ minutes) have documented the negotiations that have been going on in the organisation.

I collected documentary material from FAOF’s office as well as the most current ones from its internet site. I went to collect data three times in 2005 and 2006, photocopying a plenty of documents for my own use. I have not been able to find all documents, but some documents have gone missing. Some documents have probably disappeared during years as FAOF has moved the office many times and the personnel have changed. In addition, although I went through all FAOF’s documents three times and kept records of found and missing data, probably some documents have gone unnoticed since FAOF’s documents were archived in a rather disordered way. However, the gaps in collected data did not create any major problems to this research. Only few documents were missing in the background documents (see table 4). Moreover, as regards to discourses about farm animal welfare, Luomulehti articles turned out to be the major data source, as I discuss below, while the documentary material tended to have more a supporting role in terms of the quantity of material. In addition, although a significant amount of Ladybird working group’s minutes are missing, I could quite well track changes in the discussion concerning the Ladybird certification based on the existing data and the agendas of Ladybird working groups’ meetings.

FAOF’s director of that time was very helpful and assisted me much to find documents. She said that FAOF tries to be an open and transparent society and did not see any problem that I was investigating the documents. In addition, my research questions did not require me to examine ethically sensitive or confidential issues (such as staff policy). However, I was still very careful

when studying the organisation's non-public documents (e.g. minutes and the proposals from member societies). I decided not to take any direct quotes from non-public documents, but I have quoted only interviews or material that has been published in *Luomulehti*. Moreover, most of the information presented here had been already published somewhere (e.g. mentioned in *Luomulehti* articles). When I am presenting information that has not been published before, I have tried to make sure that I am not bringing out any sensitive information.

Table 4. Types of background documents.

| Document | Amount | Missing (est.) |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Annual reports (1985–2005) | 18 | 3 |
| Financial statements (1985–2005) | 19 | 2 |
| Constitutions (1985–2005) | 10 | 0 |
| Committee minutes (1985–2005) | 190 | 10 |
| AGM minutes (1985–2005) | 41 | 1 |
| FAOF's official statements (1989–1998) | 7 | ? |
| SWG minutes (1995–2000) | 10 | 4 |
| Other SWG documents (1995–2000) | 26 | ? |
| Organic livestock production standards (1988–2000) | 13 (including 7 small revisions) | 0 |
| Comments from regional member societies concerning organic livestock production standards (1995–2000) | 11 | ? |
| Comments from other actors concerning organic livestock production standards (1995–2000) | 11 | ? |

Table 5. Types of analysed documents.

| Document | Amount | Missing (est.) |
|---|--------|----------------|
| FAOF's official statements (2000–2005) | 10 | 1 |
| Organic livestock production standards (2000 and 2004) | 2 | 0 |
| Ladybird working group's minutes and aside material (2000–2003) | 18 | 17 |
| Comments from regional member societies on Ladybird certification (2000–2004) | 9 | 0 |

In addition to the documentary data, I also analysed certain *Luomulehti* articles. While documentary material represents a certain kind of official statement of a collective actor (FAOF, board, working group, member society), in *Luomulehti* articles the actual debates and negotiations going on in the organisation get expressed. In this genre, authors are mostly individuals and rarely collective actors and they can more freely express their individual opinions than in official statements, although the public forum character of *Luomulehti* creates a certain degree of formality in the texts. Obviously,

the opinions expressed in the magazines do not necessarily represent FAOF's views. Similarly, as I discuss below, the authors include a much wider range of authors than just FAOF's actors (e.g. researchers and civil servants). However, Luomulehti is FAOF's publication¹⁰ and its readership consist of mainly FAOF's members (Luomulehti is not sent automatically to FAOF's members, but members can order it with a discount rate). Similarly, a significant amount of the articles are still written by FAOF's employees, leaders and active members.

Luomulehti is the only magazine in Finland focusing solely on organic issues. It is portrayed as a "vocational publication" that serves the whole organic chain. In addition to organic farmers, its readers consist of advisors, educators, governmental officials and consumers, and it is also subscribed to educational institutes, libraries, food manufacturers and retailers. (Luomulehti Media Cards 2005 and 2006.) The circulation of Luomulehti grew until 1999, reaching the figure of 3300, but after this it has declined, to the number of 2800 in 2003 (Annual reports 1994–2003). The chief editor is the only regular employee in the magazine, so it mainly publishes articles written by external contributors, such as FAOF's employees, researchers, advisors and freelance journalists. The magazine has eight issues annually. All the magazines were available in the Helsinki University Science Library.

In addition to Luomulehti, I also analysed articles in *FAOF's 20 years jubilee publication*. FAOF turned 20 years in 2005 and published a jubilee magazine as a part of the anniversary. This magazine included highly interesting articles from the perspective of this research since many FAOF's central actors reflected FAOF's role and history. The publication included also interviews with farmers who had been selected at one point as "the organic farmer of the year", and these articles reported in interesting ways the farmers' experiences of being an organic farmer.

I analysed various kinds of articles: interesting pieces of texts from the perspective of this research could not only be found in articles that directly focused on livestock issues, but also in articles that dealt with, for instance, organic events, seminars, AGM meetings and the general development of the organic sector. In table 6, I have categorised Luomulehti articles by text type. Luomulehti includes lots of advisory articles since Luomulehti functions partly as FAOF's advisory tool (e.g. AR 2005, 12) and aims to disseminate information on organic farming. These are highly technical

¹⁰ FAOF publishes the Luomulehti magazine together with *Maaseudun Kehittämiskeskus Partala*, a society that provides information services in the organic sector, but in practice FAOF has the main responsibility for the publication and finances of the magazine.

articles concerning, for instance, animal housing, feeding, veterinary medicine and animal handling. The articles include research based articles ($n = 37$), which report research results from studies concerning organic livestock production, or advisory articles ($n = 17$), which are typically written by advisors (usually from ProAgria Rural Advisory Centres) or FAOF's employees.

Another central text type is farmer interviews ($n = 34$). These texts portray in interesting ways farmers' viewpoints – their motives to practice organic livestock production, their experiences of organic farming and their views about organic farming standards and certification. Chair's letters ($n = 30$) turned out to be also an interesting data source. In these texts, the chair discusses FAOF's role and organic standards as well as topical issues going on in the organic sector. Similar texts have also been written by the director, although a smaller amount of them were relevant for this research ($n = 11$). The data sample also includes interviews with various actors, such as scientists as well as FAOF's volunteers, leaders and employers ($n = 23$). In addition, I have analysed reports from events, such as seminars and fairs ($n = 18$). I also analysed pieces of texts concerning organic standards and certification ($n = 14$) and in particular concerning FAOF's own Ladybird standards ($n = 15$). There are other text types that were relevant when identifying discourses concerning farm animal welfare, but their individual number is rather small (see table 6).

Table 6. Luomulehti articles by text type (including FAOF's jubilee publication).

| | |
|---|-----|
| Research based texts | 37 |
| Farmer interviews | 34 |
| Chair's letters | 30 |
| Interviews | 23 |
| Events (e.g. seminars and fairs) | 18 |
| Advisory texts | 16 |
| Ladybird standards/certification | 15 |
| Organic standards/certification | 14 |
| Director's letters | 11 |
| News | 10 |
| Texts on regional societies | 6 |
| Region reports | 6 |
| Presentations of enterprises or public institutions | 6 |
| Food industry / markets | 6 |
| Articles on AGMs | 5 |
| Texts on agricultural policy | 5 |
| Miscellaneous (e.g. Q&A, opinion letters, book reviews) | 26 |
| Total | 268 |

The above categorisation somewhat indicates the main *discourse subjects* in FAOF's articles. I have not quantitatively evaluated how different actors contribute in constructing the meanings of farm animal welfare (comp. Juppi 2004, 137–145) since due to the very large quantity of material, I found it sufficient to focus only on identifying different discourses. Naturally, I have taken into account the discourse context and the author of the discourse when analysing the material. Nevertheless, some idea about the discourse subjects can be gained by analysing which kinds of authors have contributed to the texts (see table 7). As could be expected, the main authors of Luomulehti texts are reporters, mainly the chief editor, but also freelance journalists and summer assistants (63 texts). Typically these texts report extensively on other actors' quotes and material, so they tend to include multiple discourse subjects. As the farmer interview is a central text type, organic farmers tend to be important discourse subjects in reporter-written texts, including plenty of quotations from farmers. Reporter-written texts can quote also for instance researchers, advisors, governmental officials and the representatives of retailers or manufacturers.

Other important authors include FAOF employees (typically the director) (37 texts). Their texts can represent only the employee's view (e.g. director's letters), but they can also quote other actors (e.g. if the employee had completed a farmer interview). Also FAOF leadership is the central author (34 texts), and these articles are mostly the chair's letters (30). Researchers ($n = 29$) and advisors (mainly from ProAgria Rural Advisory Centres) ($n = 33$) form an important author pool as well. Researchers include animal welfare scientists, animal scientists and veterinarians, and their typical institutional backgrounds consist of Agricultural Research Centre, University of Helsinki (mainly the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine or Animal Sciences Department) and the Institute for Animal Welfare Science. In the case of advisors, the data is somewhat biased since the jubilee publication is edited by an advisor who has written most of the articles in the publication ($n = 13$). Thus, the contribution of advisors in Luomulehti articles is smaller than the figure indicates. There are also a smaller amount of other authors as listed in the table 7. Only five texts have been written by farmers, but as I noted, a significant proportion of articles include farmers as discourse subjects since a considerable amount of articles are farmer interviews and since many other articles includes interviews with farmers.¹¹

¹¹ The author categories are not fully definite since the background of the author was not always stated in the text. In this situation, I put the author in a certain category if the author was familiar to me from other articles. Often it was not possible to find out about the background category of the author, so the sample includes 36 texts whose author is unidentifiable. The author categories are based on the first author. I found this a useful approach since the most of the articles are single-author articles and since multi-author articles are mainly written by researchers (reports from joint projects), which would have biased the data too much to researchers.

Table 7. Luomulehti articles by the first author (including FAOF's jubilee publication).

| | |
|--|-----|
| Reporter | 63 |
| FAOF employee | 37 |
| FAOF leadership (chair or board) | 34 |
| Advisor | 33 |
| Researcher | 29 |
| Finfood employee | 8 |
| Other professional (e.g. project coordinator, civil servant) | 7 |
| Entrepreneur | 6 |
| Society / committee / volunteer | 6 |
| Veterinarian | 4 |
| Farmer | 5 |
| Author unknown | 36 |
| Total | 268 |

The majority of articles (154) do not focus solely on organic livestock production, but they discuss the organic farming field in general, commenting only partly livestock production (see table 8).

These types of articles typically include regional society presentations, reports on events, articles on Ladybird certification as well as chair's and director's letters. However, from those articles that focus solely on livestock production, a clear majority (61) are about cattle production (dairy and beef production). Only 11 articles refer solely to poultry production and 11 to pig production. 32 texts deal with livestock production in general or more than one production lines. The high number of cattle-related articles stems from the fact that organic cattle farming is the most important livestock production sector in terms of the number of farms (see section 3.3).

Table 8. Luomulehti articles by production line (including FAOF's jubilee publication).

| | |
|---|-----|
| Texts not focusing solely on livestock issues | 154 |
| Cattle production (dairy and beef) | 61 |
| Several livestock production lines | 32 |
| Poultry production (meat and eggs) | 11 |
| Pork production | 10 |
| Total | 268 |

In addition to using documentary data and Luomulehti articles, I also interviewed five of FAOF's volunteers or representatives in autumn 2005. The interviews had two functions. Firstly, they helped me in gaining background information concerning FAOF's role, actors and the standards-creation processes. There were some information gaps in Luomulehti articles and documentary material, and

interviews helped me in forming a more complete understanding of FAOF's activities. Secondly, I used the interview material to analyse the discourses concerning farm animal welfare. With interviews I could study the discourses of FAOF's employees, leaders and activists in more detail – formed in their talk, rather than in writing. I treat interviews as a distinct kind of discursive context in which interviewees, together with the interviewer, generate stories and accounts of organic livestock production (see Silverman 2005, 154–157). As an interviewer, I have directed the discussion of FAOF's actors to certain themes and to certain conceptual areas through interview questions and through the concepts used in those questions. To help the interviewee to give accounts in her/his own terms, I tried to keep my interview questions rather general and open.

I interviewed people whom I considered key actors in the formation of FAOF's policies and FAOF's organic standards at the time or earlier in FAOF's history. The interviewed people were identified based on the documentary data or asking suggestions from already interviewed individuals. The interviewees were – or had been – FAOF's employees or in positions of trust in the organisation. The sample included two livestock producers and three other professionals, mostly (4) women. Due to the reasons of anonymity, I cannot describe their position in the organisation or their background variables in more detail.

Interviews were carried with a loose theme-based interview guide. The interview guide somewhat varied between interviews since I directed the interview according to the person's role and experiences in the organisation. However, questions concerning the views about organic livestock production and organic standards were similar in all interview guides. The interview guides included questions concerning the person's own background, the role of FAOF, views about organic livestock production (e.g. basic values, changes in the organic livestock industry, how the sector should be developed), animal welfare in organic farming (the meaning of animal welfare, views about animal welfare requirements in organic standards), the development of FAOF's organic livestock production standards, governmental standards (differences between FAOF's standards and governmental standards, how FAOF can influence in governmental standards) as well as the Ladybird certification. All interview guides are available upon request.

The interviews lasted typically about 1–1.5 hours, but one interview lasted five hours, completed in two sessions, since the interviewee has been central to the standards-creation process and richly discussed about the issue. I have paid attention to this bias in my analysis. I interviewed one person twice: first I did a mapping interview with the person at the beginning of my research to get a basic

understanding of FAOF's role in organic livestock issues; the aim of the second interview was to gain information on specific issues on standards-setting processes. One person was interviewed in FAOF's office, two were interviewed during FAOF's 20th anniversary celebration in Mikkeli and two interviews were carried by phone. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

When I refer to the data sources in the text, I have used certain abbreviations to save some space. The abbreviations are listed below. I refer to interviews in three ways: "iv, FAOF representative", "iv, FAOF volunteer" and "iv, FAOF specialist advisor". In this way it was possible to somehow specify the interviewed person, while at the same time protecting his/her anonymity. I refer to Luomulehti articles in the following way: the first author's surname LL issue/year (e.g. Seppälä LL 2/00), so that Luomulehti-references can be distinguished from references to research literature. I have listed in Finnish all Luomulehti articles and articles in the FAOF's jubilee publication in Appendix 3 and all documents in Appendix 2. I have translated all the quotes into English. I did not translate them fully verbatim in order to make them readable in English; however, I tried to preserve the original meaning in the translation as well as possible. Original Finnish quotes are available on request.

Table 9. Data abbreviations.

AR = Annual review
 AGM = Annual general meeting
 CM = Committee minutes
 Iv = Interview
 LWG = Ladybird working group
 LL = Luomulehti
 PR = Press release
 SWG = Standards working group

4.4 Discourse analysis

As I am interested in how the meanings of animal welfare are constructed in FAOF's texts, I have found discourse analysis as a useful methodological approach to analyse the data. In discourse analysis there is an interest to investigate how the social reality or certain meanings are produced in the language use¹² (Jokinen et al. 1993b, 9–10). Discourse analysis is a loose methodological

¹² "Language use" refers to any action that conveys meanings or exchanges symbols, such as writing, talking, "body language", dressing, home decoration, gardening, etc. (see e.g. Suoninen 1993). Similarly, "text" refers to anything that communicate meanings, such as speech, written pieces, visual images, non-verbal communication, fashion and architecture (comp. Burr 1995, 50–51; Suoninen 1993, 60–61).

approach that includes a diversity of orientations and methodological applications (Jokinen 1999a; Jokinen et al. 1993a, 17; Suoninen 1999, 35–36). Although different orientations in discourse analysis diverge from each other in many respects, they still do share certain theoretical presumptions. For instance, these approaches are committed to the constructionist framework (see section 4.2), they regard discourses as context-specific and it is viewed that there can be simultaneously multiple and competing discourses in a certain topic area (Jokinen et al. 1993a).

Like many other abstract concepts, such as “culture” and “power”, it is difficult to define discourse and to give it any single, unambiguous meaning (Burr 1995, 48). In discourse analysis, the “discourse” has tended to refer to a rather solid and integrated set of meanings, in which the reality is constructed in a certain way (Suoninen 1999, 21). As Burr (1995, 49) writes, discourse is “a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on, that in some way together produce a particular version of events. It refers to a particular picture that is painted of an event (or person or class of persons), a particular way of representing it or them in a certain light.” In this way, discourses enable seeing an object in a certain way, but at the same time they limit seeing it in another ways (comp. Juppi 2004, 146).

Any object is surrounded by multiple discourses and each of them constructs the object in a different way. In Burr’s (1995, 49) words, “Each discourse brings different aspects into focus, raises different issues for consideration, and has different implications for what we should do.” Some discourses can co-exist easily or complement each other, while other discourses can be conflicting, creating a highly contested meaning construction process. This can lead to a situation in which a certain discourse gains a hegemonic status, so that its meanings become widely shared, taken-for-granted “truths”, while other discourses become marginal or resistance discourses. (Jokinen et al. 1993a, 29.) In this research the multiplicity of discourses implies that a single piece of text can include several actors who create meanings from the perspective of different discourses, or the same actor can use numerous discourses. In particular, a journalist can include materials from several discourses into her/his “speech”. (Comp. Juppi 2004, 146–147.) I do not regard discourses as highly established and static sets of meanings, like in some approaches of discourse analysis, but rather, I view discourses as context-bounded, contested and continuously changing (ibid. 147).

In discourse analysis, the language use is not viewed as a way to gain insights from the inner life of people, and the aim of the analysis is not to study the intentions, attitudes or opinions of the actors (Burr 1995, 49–50; Jokinen et al. 1993a, 37). This implies that in this research I am not aiming to review how the representations of organic livestock farming in FAOF's texts may be related to the inner attitudes and views of discourse subjects.

Discourses do not appear in the data in any kind of comprehensive, easily identifiable set of meanings (Jokinen et al. 1993a, 28). Pieces of discourses – certain types of expressions, word usage, arguments, categorisations and so on – are widely dispersed in the whole data set, and combining them to a certain kind of set of meanings results from the researcher's interpretation work (Juppi 2004, 152). For this reason, my way of distinguishing different discourses in FAOF's texts is not obviously the only possible interpretation of this data (comp. Burr 1995, 180; Juhila & Suoninen 1999, 234–235). However, I have aimed to base this interpretation on a careful and detailed analysis of the texts (comp. Jokinen & Juhila 1993, 107). Similarly, I aim to show in as transparent way as possible how I have interpreted the data and to illustrate my paths of reasoning with the extensive usage of quotations from the original texts (comp. Juhila & Suoninen 1999, 234–235; Juppi 2004, 152).

Specific analysis of the data

When I was studying the construction of the meanings of animal welfare in FAOF's texts, I firstly reviewed how farmers' *orientations toward animal welfare* are represented: what kind of role animal welfare plays in *farmers' reasons to convert to organic farming and to continue practising organic farming*, as related to other reasons, particularly economic reasons. In this way, I can analyse what kinds of *rationales* organic farmers give to their farming choices and how they describe the *basic ideas* of organic farming. I also analyse *which kinds of identities are produced for organic livestock producers*. The identity refers to characters the actor is represented to possess by the actor her/himself or by other discourse subjects (comp. Jokinen et al. 1993a, 38–39). In this way, I am studying both farmers' own representations of themselves, their own definitions of who they are, and other actors' constructions of farmers' identities. An important part of the identity construction is the distinction making: how the farmer is positioned in relation to other organic farmers and to conventional farmers and what kinds of “us”–“them” distinctions are made (comp. Juppi 2004, 150). I understand the identity here as an identity constructed in the language use, and I am not reviewing how the identity represented in texts may correspond with farmers' genuine self-

understandings (comp. Juppi 2004, 150–151)¹³. The identities constructed in the language use can be highly transient: certain self-conceptions are constructed in certain situations, and the same actor may have varying identities in different contexts (Jokinen et al. 1993a, 37–39). One way to analyse the identity construction is to review the *labelling practices* in the text: to which kinds of *categories* organic farmers are included with certain word-choices (see Jokinen 1999b, 141–144; Juppi 2004, 150).

In addition to analysing organic farmers' orientation to animal welfare, I have also analysed *arguments concerning animal welfare standards and measures to promote animal welfare in organic farming*. The question of animal welfare in organic standards is related to the wider issue concerning the role of FAOF's own standards – how stringent they should be compared to the governmental standards and how FAOF should be involved in developing and maintaining them. For this reason, I also analyse *the arguments concerning the development of FAOF's Ladybird standards*. I am applying here a *rhetorically-oriented discourse analysis*, which investigates how certain arguments are made persuasive and convincing and how the audience is made committed to them (Jokinen 1999a, 46; Jokinen 1999b, 126). In particular, I am interested in what kinds of *positions* actors take concerning the level of animal welfare requirements and how they support, defend and justify these positions, and concomitantly, criticise counter-positions (Jokinen 1999b, 127). Rhetoric is everywhere in language use – it does not appear only in political discussion or in otherwise explicitly argumentative and persuasive forms of communication, but also, for instance, in ordinary everyday language (Jokinen 1999a, 46–47; Jokinen 1999b, 128). Thus, while some of the FAOF's texts, like local societies' comments and the chair's or director's letters, include explicit and intentional endeavours to persuade others, other texts, such as farmer interviews, are not often an explicit contribution to any debate, but they do still include attempts to support certain positions.

In more practical terms, the analysis was carried out by coding the data with the help of the qualitative analysis software NVivo. By coding I mean simply, following sociologists Matthew B. Miles and Michael A. Huberman (1994, 57), “assigning units of meaning to pieces of data” with a certain label – code. These “units of meaning” were at different levels of analysis, so that some

¹³ Often the concept of “subject position” is used instead of “identity” in discourse analysis. The term “subject position” is typically applied when there is an interest to study the restrictions laid on the subject's agency: how actors get locked into certain positions and how their ability to take different positions is constrained. (Jokinen et al. 1993a, 38–40.) In this research I prefer to use the concept of identity since I am not focusing on reviewing the constraining factors in the self-construction. The concept of identity permits a review to be made of the transient and situated construction of the self in the language use: an actor may have various selves in different contexts, instead of one static self (ibid. 37–39).

codes were more descriptive while others were more conceptual (ibid. 57–58). Likewise, some codes were data-based in the sense that I coded themes that recurrently emerged in the data, but some codes were based on my research questions and theoretical interests. During the analysis, codes and their relationships changed and developed. As the analysis progressed, I started focusing more on certain core codes and on developing them and discarded many codes I found unfruitful or irrelevant to my research questions. The development of core codes and their sub-codes included breaking down some codes into smaller categories or transferring previously unconnected codes to new categories. (Comp. Miles & Huberman 1994, 61–62; Strauss 1987, 32–36.) There is a full list of the final analytic codes in Appendix 1. I defined each analytic code as clearly and accurately as possible to help me assigning codes to bits of data consistently and systematically (comp. Miles & Huberman 1994, 63–64).

Working with the qualitative analysis software NVivo helped significantly with this constant revision of codes. I had some data in electronic format (e.g. transcribed interviews, documents taken from FAOF's internet site and Luomulehti articles I scanned), but still a significant amount of documents and Luomulehti articles were not in electronic format. I coded these texts first manually, and then I put these text pieces to NVivo files as short notes, coding these pieces again with NVivo. This helped me significantly to gain an overall understanding of the frequency of quotations under each code as well as to remember and find different pieces of texts. When I used the material based on my notes, I went back to the original document to see the full coded text.

5 Regulating the meaning of organic farming and FAOF's changing role

In this section, I discuss what kind of organisation FAOF is and how its role has changed as the organic sector has been expanding. I review how FAOF has been involved in standards-setting, inspection and certification activities and how its status in this field has altered as the government has become increasingly involved in these activities.

5.1 What is FAOF?

Finnish Association for Organic Farming (FAOF) (in Finnish Luomuliitto) was founded in 1985 as a national umbrella organisation for organisations that operate in the organic sector. FAOF's primary members are regional organic farming societies, whose members are mostly farmers, but they can

include also consumers and other actors involved in the organic sector, such as advisors. In FAOF's constitution, FAOF has been always defined as a "national collaboration organisation" for actors working in the organic field. In its current constitution (2005), FAOF defines its purpose in the following ways,

The purpose of the society is to attend to the general and shared interests of the organic field, to promote collaboration among its members and to improve the operational preconditions of the field. The Association is a national collaboration organisation for societies, communities and individual persons operating in the organic field or being interested in the field.

The purpose of the Association is to promote general preconditions for ecological and environmentally friendly organic food production and to promote ethical animal husbandry. The aim of the Association is to develop the availability of organic food products.

In 2005, FAOF had 12 regional society members, which cover different parts of the country¹⁴. FAOF has also "other society members", such as environmental, biodynamic and rural advisory organisations, but they have only nominal power in the AGM. FAOF has also "supporting members", mainly enterprises operating in the organic or food sector, which do not have any voting power in the AGM. From 2003 onwards, individuals (e.g. farmers and consumers) have been able to join FAOF directly, so that people living in the areas not covered by the regional organic farming societies can join the organisation, but in 2005 there were only few (172) direct members. These individuals have a voting power corresponding to the voting power of the members of the regional organic farming societies. (AR 2005; Constitution 2005.)¹⁵

FAOF is a small organisation, having only few members of staff. From the late 1990s the amount of its members (members of the principal member societies and direct members) has been gradually declining, from 2821 in 1998 to 1907 in 2005 (AR 2001, 12; AR 2005, 5). This trend reflects partly the general decline in the amount of organic farms from 2000 onwards (see section 3.3). However, also the share of organic farmers who are members of FAOF has somewhat declined – from 56 percent in 1998 to 39 percent in 2005. According to the interviewed FAOF representatives, the relatively small "unionisation rate" is related to the fact that governmental statistics include both

¹⁴ The regional member societies include, in the order of their size, Pirkanmaan luonnonmukaisen viljelyn yhdistys ry (Tampere Region), Lounais-Suomen Luomu ry (Southwest Finland), Ekoviljelijät ry (Ostrobothnia), Pohjois-Pohjanmaan luonnonmukaisen viljelyn yhdistys ry (Northern Ostrobothnia), ESVY ry (Southern Finland), Saimaan Luomu ry (Saimaa Region), Pohjois-Savon luonnonmukaisen viljelyn yhdistys ry (North-Savo Region), Keski-Pohjanmaan luonnonmukaisen viljelyn yhdistys ry (Central Ostrobothnia), Satakunnan luomutuottajat ry (Satakunta Region), Kainuun luonnonmukaisen viljelyn yhdistys ry (Kainuu Region), Kuhilas ry (Kymenlaakso Region) and Päijänteen Luomu ry (Päijänne Region) (AR 2005, 5–6).

¹⁵ I have referred to data sources with abbreviations in order to save some space. The list of abbreviations can be found in section 4.3, table 9.

farmers who sell their products as certified organic products and those who do not. Those farmers that rely more on organic subsidies than on price-premiums as a source of income may be less interested in developing organic markets and may identify themselves less as “organic farmers” and hence may not be that interested in joining FAOF. However, FAOF has aspired to raise the “unionisation rate” by aiming to communicate more effectively its importance to all organic farmers (e.g. FAOF’s mission statement 2005). It is important to note that although FAOF consists mainly of farmers, agricultural experts (mainly advisors) with university or college education have been active in FAOF, and they have often had influential positions in the organisation – for instance, acting as chairs and board members.

During its history, FAOF has had a diversity of roles. It has disseminated information about organic farming to consumers and farmers, lobbied the government, given advice to farmers, maintained organic standards, carried out inspection and certification as well as contributed to the development of organic marketing chains.¹⁶ However, as the organic sector has become increasingly institutionalised, other actors have started taken over FAOF’s previous functions. Advisory services are nowadays mainly concentrated in *ProAgria Rural Advisory Centres*. The governmental organic standards and inspection system was progressively established from 1995 onwards, leading to a decline in FAOF’s standards-setting, inspection and certification activities, as will be discussed in more detail below. Likewise, the launching of *Finfood Luomu* in 1998 – an organisation that promotes Finnish markets for organic products – meant that FAOF’s consumer activities began to diminish and FAOF begun to focus more on primary production (iv, FAOF representative). In addition, in 1992 the *Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners* (MTK) established an organic farming committee, so that also MTK became involved in lobbying organic farmers’ interests.

These transformations in FAOF’s operating environment have lead to a considerable restructuring in its main roles. FAOF has increasingly profiled itself as a “specialist advisory organisation” and an “expert lobby organisation” (FAOF’s Mission Statement 2005), so that it has focused on advisory and interest lobbying activities. I review in more detail the changes in FAOF’s role in section 6.4.

¹⁶ When I describe FAOF’s activities in general terms and do not refer to specific facts, and when these descriptions are based on multiple sources (e.g. constitutions, committee minutes, working group materials and so on), I have not put any specific data references to the text.

5.2 Governmentalisation of the regulation of organic farming

The aim of this section is to describe the regulatory environment that forms the context for standards-discourses in FAOF. This section gives necessary background information that is needed in order to analyse arguments concerning animal welfare and Ladybird standards in FAOF (see section 6). Describing the changes in FAOF's standards-setting and certification activities presented a considerable challenge. The story of the Ladybird label was complex, multifaceted and controversial, and it was not an easy task to track all the changes in the story based on Luomulehti articles, documentary material and interviews. It has not been possible to include all the turns in the story, but I have tried to describe main points as well as possible.

In Finland, the regulation of organic farming and codification of its meaning has followed similar lines to those documented in other countries (see section 3.5.3) – progressing from non-certified on-trust systems to movement-driven relatively informal certification systems and finally to highly professionalised and institutionalised systems with governmental involvement. Initially, FAOF was a central actor in setting organic standards as well as in carrying out inspection and certification, but when the government overtook these activities, FAOF's own private standards and certification activities almost ceased to exist, leading to major restructuring in FAOF's main roles.

In Finland organic standards were firstly created in biodynamic farming as the Biodynamic Association established the Demeter certification scheme in 1954. First general organic standards were created by the Bios Society in the late 1970s, but the inspection of Bios products remained quite marginal, relying mainly on the growers from the 4H Federation. (Heinonen 2004, 337, 341–342.) About the same time, some regional organic farming societies started setting organic farming standards in their area, but these certification schemes did not cover the whole country (MAF 1984, 15). Thus, the first task of the newly founded FAOF was to set nation-wide, broadly agreed standards as well as an inspection and certification system to organic farming. In 1986, FAOF created its first organic standards and established an inspection system (AGM 20/4/1986), followed by organic livestock standards in 1988 (AGM 7/1/1988). FAOF became soon the principal organisation in defining and regulating the meanings of organic farming. It began increasingly to standardise and institutionalise the inspection carried out by regional societies (e.g. CM 3/87, 12/6/90; AR 1986), and it bought the organic trademark from the Southern Savo organic farming society (currently Saimaan Luomu) in 1989, establishing the Ladybird label as a label for certified organic products (CM 18/9/88; AGM 30/11/1989).

As in movement-driven certification schemes in other countries (see section 3.5.3), FAOF's standards-setting and inspection processes were highly participatory. Revised standards were accepted in AGMs with simple majority. Before AGMs, the board circulated draft-standards to regional member societies for comments, and the societies could also develop initiatives around these standards. In addition, individual farmers or farmer groups participated in standards-setting processes by contacting FAOF's livestock officers and by sending written comments to FAOF. Also the inspection system was based on the work of volunteers. Certification decisions were made by regional inspection boards, which included farmer and consumer members. Inspection was often carried out by advisors of Rural Advisory centres, and included a great deal of advising and dialogue as a part of the inspection process (see Seppänen & Helenius 2004, 1–3).

As in early movement driven standards-setting schemes in other countries (see section 3.5.3), FAOF's early organic livestock standards were rather short and very broadly defined. These vague definitions left considerable power at the inspection level, implying that in the initial phases of FAOF's certification there was still a diversity of concepts around organic livestock farming, instead of any solid single definition. However, with several revisions of organic livestock standards, they became increasingly detailed and more technically refined and they also started regulating the different aspects of animal farming more extensively.

FAOF's central role in setting organic standards and certifying organic farming started weakening when the government began increasingly to regulate the sector, establishing governmental standards and inspection in organic crop production in 1994 and in organic livestock production in 2000. The growing governmental involvement in Finland is an unique process since in most of the EU countries private bodies have continued standards-setting, inspection and certification activities, and in the EU only in Spain, Denmark and Finland do the governments currently set and inspect organic standards (see a story on growing governmental involvement in Denmark in Michelsen 2001). The strong governmental involvement in Finland partly reflects the centrality of the state in general in the country and the tendency of the state to include social movements in its normal policy making (Siisiäinen 1998, 223–224). The government supported inspection activities from the very beginning as it subsidised FAOF's inspection activities from its inception. Reviewing why the government wanted to set up its own inspection and certification system, instead of continuing supporting FAOF's inspection activities, would be a subject matter for another research. Here I can only note the explicit reasons stated in the early Committee report on organic farming by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). In this report it was argued that the governmental involvement in

standards-setting and inspection is needed because of the growth in organic markets and in the general societal significance of organic farming; because of the introduction of the governmental conversion subsidy scheme as well as because of the consumer protection and international trade reasons (MAF 1991). Therefore, at the beginning of the 1990s, the government had already commenced the preparation of legislation on organic farming. However, the governmental standards and inspection system was set up only when the EU's Council Regulation (EEC) 2092/91 on organic farming was included in Finland's EEA-agreement's (European Economic Area) additional protocol in 1994 (Law on ETA-agreement protocol, 530/1994, 4 §). Soon after this, in 1995, Finland joined the EU so the EU's Council Regulation came directly into effect for Finland (MAF decree 1339/1995). MAF became responsible for organising the inspection system with the help of Plant Production Inspection Centre (KTTK) and the agricultural industry districts (Law on ETA-agreement protocol, 530/1994, 4 §; MAF decree 1339/1995). In its early comments to the government, FAOF was not in agreement with a fully governmentalised standards-setting and inspection system although it supported a certain degree of governmental involvement (e.g. the registration of certifying bodies by the government). FAOF took the view that it is important to maintain local inspection bodies and to secure the participatory and multi-partisan character of inspection and certification. (E.g. FAOF's Proposal to MAF 18/5/1989; FAOF's Statement to MAF 18/6/1991; CM 9/10/1993.)

Even after the introduction of the governmental inspection system for crop production, the FAOF's role in *inspection* activities was initially rather strong, but gradually its role became highly marginal. FAOF continued to carry out inspection in organic livestock production and in the processing of organic livestock products until 2000, since only then the Council Regulation 1804/99 on organic livestock production came into force. Although the governmental inspection system was set up in the crop side of organic production in 1994, initially the regional committees were still involved in carrying out the inspection in organic crop production, with decision-making power in certification (Law on ETA-agreement protocol, 530/1994, 4 §; Decree on organic production inspection, 557/1994, 2 §). However, the regional committees became only advisory and lost their decision-making power as early as 1995 when the statute was renewed due to the new EU membership (MAF decree 1339/1995, 7 §). Later, advisory regional committees were also suspended (MAF Statute 346/00).

Although FAOF's role in inspection activities in organic crop production had diminished significantly by the mid-1990s, its role in *standards-setting and certification activities* continued to

be strong still for a few years. FAOF's Ladybird certification continued to be popular among farmers and processing companies since the government had not yet established any new label for organic products, and the governmental certification was signified only by a written document, which was not considered sufficient for communicating to consumers about the organic quality of the product. Moreover, Finland continued to set stricter requirements for organic crop production than the Council Regulation with respect to the conditions of organic subsidy schemes. These additional requirements in subsidy schemes, such as certain rules concerning composting and control agents, were based on FAOF's standards, and hence the conditions of organic subsidy schemes were parallel with FAOF's organic crop production standards. (E.g. Heinonen LL 5/96; Auranen LL 5/00; MAF 1996, 42.) Consequently, since governmental and Ladybird standards were complementary, it was straightforward to carry out the Ladybird inspection alongside the governmental inspection.

However, the government had plans to introduce its own organic label (MAF 1996, 18–19, 46). Initially, the government showed an interest in buying the already well-known Ladybird label from FAOF since in this way the government would have avoided the costs of introducing and marketing an entirely new label (e.g. AGM 13/4/1996; AGM 19/4/1997; AR 1997, 10; Terhemaa LL 2/97). However, the government and FAOF did not come into agreement on the conditions of the transaction and FAOF decided not to sell the label to the government (AGM 19/4/1997). FAOF wanted to secure its influence in standards-setting and to ensure that the standards could include stricter requirements than the Council Regulation, which was not approved by the government (Terhemaa LL 1/98, 18; Tiilikainen LL 4/98). The government introduced its own label, the Sun-label, in 1998 (MAF 2002, 17), and it started funding a scheme, *Finfood Luomu*, that promotes the Sun label and the marketing of organic products. FAOF would have liked the Ladybird label to be promoted in this scheme, but it was decided that private organisations' labels – Demeter and Ladybird – are not be marketed in the scheme (AGM 15/11/1997). This created a major disadvantage for the Ladybird label as it was not backed by such a large amount of marketing funding as the governmental label. The governmental certification was free to enterprises and, consequently, many enterprises started using the Sun label solely. Hence, the revenue from Ladybird certification started to decline considerably, and it lost its status as a significant source of income in FAOF. Under these circumstances FAOF soon felt obliged to provide Ladybird certification to enterprises for free. (Tuomola LL 7/99 and LL 8/99; Rantanen LL 8/99.)

The Ladybird certification scheme encountered further challenges and its place in FAOF had to be fully reviewed when the government's and FAOF's standards started differing. As mentioned, initially the conditions of governmental organic subsidy schemes were approximately equivalent to FAOF's organic crop production standards. In this situation, FAOF distinguished the Ladybird label from the Sun label as a symbol of Finnish organic production since imported products could be labelled with the Sun label if they fulfil the criteria of EU standards, while Ladybird certification was provided only for domestic products (AR 1998, 10; Terhemaa LL 4/98; Tiilikainen LL 4/98). However, this situation changed in crop production in 2000 when the government started equalising the requirements of organic support schemes and those of the Council Regulation, relaxing, for instance, composting requirements (Koskimies LL 2/00; Auranen LL 5/00). This created a discussion in FAOF about whether composting rules, which had previously been the subject of a heated debate, should also be relaxed in the Ladybird standards (Koskimies LL 2/00), but FAOF decided to maintain the stricter standards (AGM 18/3/2000; Rantanen LL 3/00). This implied that fundamental rules in governmental and Ladybird standards had become differentiated (Auranen LL 5/00; Koskimies LL 3/00). Thus, from 2000 onwards, Ladybird standards for organic crop production included a number of requirements in addition to governmental standards, such as certain composting rules, longer conversion periods as well as restrictions in the usage of certain fertilisers, fur farm manure, soil enrichment agents and control agents (Auranen LL 5/00; Anonymous author LL 4/00). This created extra costs in Ladybird certification since the additional requirements had to be inspected separately during the governmental inspection (Koskimies LL 2/00; Auranen LL 5/00).

The introduction of governmental livestock production standards in 2000 also heightened these challenges. Council Regulation (EC) 1804/1999 on organic livestock production was enforced in Finland in 2000 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Decree (74/2000). The Plant Production Inspection Centre (KTTK) produced specific organic livestock production guidelines, based on the Council Regulation and the MAF Decree (nowadays the guidelines are produced by the Finnish Food Safety Authority (EVIRA)). The governmental standards (Council Regulation, MAF Decree and KTTK Guidelines) differed from FAOF's standards in many respects, as I discuss in section 6.1.3.

There were increasing pressures in FAOF to unify Ladybird standards with government's standards as there were concerns that the majority of farmers would begin to use the Sun label and the Ladybird would become marginalised. It was argued that stricter standards in Ladybird certification did not reflect in better price premiums and thus farmers would be unwilling to accept an increase in

production costs because of the extra-requirements (see section 6.2.2). These concerns were enhanced by the rapid decline in the number of Ladybird-certified farms, which dropped from 2800 in 1998 to only 240 in 2002 (AR 1998, 15; CM 24/2/2003).

FAOF established several “Ladybird working groups” (LWGs) in 2000–2003 to address these problems with Ladybird certification. The first Ladybird working group proposed the foundation of a new organisation to carry out the administrative, inspection and marketing work needed in the Ladybird certification (AGM 18/11/2000). The new organisation – *Luomuleppis Co-op* – was founded in 2001, and in addition to FAOF it had some organic marketing companies as its founding members (AR 2001, 13; Rantanen LL 4/01). However, the Co-op lacked sufficient developmental resources, and hence in practice in 2001 and 2002 FAOF continued to be an owner of the label and issuer of the certificates, paying the inspection and certification costs (CM 30/4/2002; CM 19/12/2002, Luomuleppis Co-op CM 13/2/2002).

Ladybird certification started to become increasingly problematic. FAOF lacked the resources to inspect the usage of the label in markets and to inspect the origins of the food ingredients used in processing. Hence, Ladybird certification system focused only on primary producers and it could serve only very short marketing chains. (Auranen LL 7/02; LWG 4/10/2002; Partanen LL 3/03; LWG Memo 28/1/2003.) In addition, FAOF lacked resources to disseminate information on Ladybird certification, and consequently, it appeared that farmers and manufacturers were quite unaware of it (LWG 17/6/2002; LWG 9/8/2002; Saimaan Luomu comment 17/6/2002).

These problems created a situation in 2003 where the Luomuleppis Co-op announced to the spring meeting that it could not perform the Ladybird inspection since, among other factors, the per farm costs of inspection were high because of the limited number of Ladybird producers remaining. Consequently, the committee set up a new Ladybird working group to develop the rules of the label and to plan the administration and the promotion of the label (CM 28/4/2003). The new working group, named as the Leppis-brand working group (“Leppis” is a nickname for Ladybird in FAOF), proposed to the autumn meeting that the Ladybird system would be changed to a quality label system, with standards exceeding the Council Regulation (Leppis-brand WG proposal in AGM 22/11/2003). This proposal was based on an increasing interest in the Finnish food sector to develop a national quality strategy and to promote quality system training among farmers. In the Ladybird quality system the inspection would not be carried out annually, but every three years. The new kind of quality certification system was accepted in FAOF, but not consensually (AGM 22/11/2003;

AGM 11/3/2004). Some actors would have liked to keep the annual inspection, although allowing it to be carried out only among a certain proportion of Ladybird farmers, chosen randomly (Saimaan Luomu comment 9/3/2004). Likewise, there were some disagreements among FAOF's actors about which rules should be included as "obligatory" and which rules as "voluntary requirements" in the quality certification scheme.

In the final accepted quality certification scheme the number of obligatory requirements was diminished and it included fewer additional requirements to the Council Regulations than the original Ladybird standards. The standards required only that the organic matter used in growing crops directly consumed by humans must be composted, that the primary products must be domestic and that 75 percent of ingredients used in processed products have to be of Finnish origin (Ladybird Standards 2004). Thus, the label was primarily profiled as a sign of Finnish organic production. In the new standard many of the old Ladybird requirements, such as restrictions in using fur farm manure and in applying certain control agents, were included as voluntary additional requirements, but not as obligatory requirements. Also voluntary requirements in organic livestock production included some of the old Ladybird rules, such as a requirement to use only domestic feedstuffs, 50 percent self-sufficiency in feedstuffs, a calving pen and a certain minimum weaning age for calves. (Ibid.)

The establishment of the Ladybird as a quality label implied a clear change in the Ladybird certification scheme as it was no longer based on annual inspection and its standards were significantly reduced. The Ladybird quality certification scheme has remained highly marginal. It has been estimated that only about 50 producers use the Ladybird certification (iv, FAOF representative). FAOF has lacked resources to promote the label, although it has not applied any funding to a project, in which a quality system for organic farming would be developed and the Ladybird standard in this kind of quality system could be utilised (iv, FAOF representative and volunteer). Since 2004 there have not been any changes with the Ladybird certification system, but at least thus far the possibility of developmental activities concerning Ladybird have been left in table (Vilkuna, 28/4/2009).

Thus, when the government has become increasingly involved in the standards-setting, inspection and certification fields, FAOF has not been able to maintain a flourishing private certification scheme alongside the governmental system. This has implied a clear change in the regulation of the meaning of organic farming in Finland. While FAOF's early standards-setting and certification

activities represented a participatory, movement-driven and grass roots based approach to the regulation of the meaning of organic farming, the governmental system represents a juridical codification of this meaning. Organic farmers can no longer significantly influence in the creation of organic standards, but rather they currently need to obey rules given from “above”. As a FAOF’s representative puts it,

A farmer’s direct possibility to influence organic livestock production was essentially diminished [when the governmental standards were established]. Before this, during the FAOF’s period [of setting standards], a single farmer or a regional society could declare that in their opinion we should do things in this way, that a farrowing pen should have a certain size or there should be more perches per animal in a hennery. So it was much easier to discuss these things nationally, compared to nowadays when they [standards] are decided by all EU-countries together.

Similarly, the inspection of organic farming is no longer based on the work of volunteers in the multi-partisan regional inspection boards, but rather the inspection has become highly professionalised, subjected to the bureaucratic and juridical procedures of the government. Likewise, as I have already noted, when the government started to practise inspection, the advising during the inspection begun to vanish since it was considered that advising takes too much resource from the actual inspection work (Seppänen & Helenius 2004, 1–3). As a FAOF’s volunteer puts it,

In the KTTK’s [Plant Production Inspection Centre] system it has been emphasised to inspectors that they are not advisors. During the time of the Ladybird label, they [inspectors] were also advisors and they discussed with you. It was an interactive situation, farmers really looked forward to an inspector coming. Nowadays it is a bit like the police are coming.

In this way, as in many other countries (see section 3.5.3), in Finland the early movement actors have become increasingly marginalised in the official standards-setting fields, while the power of governmental actors in the defining the meaning of organic farming has increased.

In this section I have given only a general overview of how FAOF’s role in regulating the meaning of organic farming has changed, but I have not yet touched upon how these transformations were discussed in FAOF. Hence, in the following section I turn to explore discourses concerning animal welfare standards and FAOF’s Ladybird standards.

6 Meanings of animal welfare in FAOF's discourses

In FAOF's texts it is possible to identify several competing discourses that give meanings to organic livestock production and farm animal welfare in different ways. They construct different identities for organic livestock producers, portray farmers' orientations to animal welfare in varying ways and have different positions concerning animal welfare and Ladybird standards. In this section I argue that we can identify three main ways of speaking concerning the meanings of animal welfare in organic farming in FAOF's texts: an ideological discourse, a market-oriented discourse and an animal welfare business discourse. By discourse I refer to a rather solid and integrated set of meanings, in which the reality is constructed in a certain way (see section 4.4). Discourse gives a perspective that guides the interpretation of an object or an event and constructs a particular picture of them, enabling us to see them in a certain way.

In the ideological discourse, organic farming is portrayed as a value-based choice. Morality is the central reference point, rather than economics or money. Animal health and welfare appear as central reasons for farmers to convert to organic farming. This discourse includes aspirations to continue maintaining FAOF's own Ladybird certification system as well as to keep Ladybird standards more stringent than governmental ones in order to achieve certain organic farming ideals more effectively. In the market-oriented discourse organic livestock farming is approached mainly in terms of economics, money, business and markets, while moral and ideological references have a minor place in its argumentation. Economic reasons appear to be the prime reasons for organic farmers to convert to organic farming. In this discourse, organic farming is represented as a reasonable, efficient and profitable form of farming, and a certain distance is taken to any kind of "fundamentalism", "ideologism" or "religiosity" in order to increase the credibility of organic farming. Stringent animal welfare standards are opposed on economic grounds. Similarly, in this discourse it is argued that the Ladybird standards should not include any additional requirements to the governmental ones as the costs caused by more stringent standards would not be compensated with better price premiums.

The animal welfare business discourse represents aspirations to reconcile the tensions between ideological discourse and market oriented discourse, and this discourse combines elements from the both discourses. As with the ideological discourse, animal welfare standards and measures are supported, but not with moral arguments, but with economic arguments like in the market-oriented discourse. The promotion of animal welfare and the farmer's economic interests are represented to

be complementary. Stringent animal welfare and Ladybird standards are portrayed as bringing important image benefits to organic farming and in this way improved price premiums for farmers. After I have discussed each of these three discourses, I turn to discuss their relationships, aiming to show that the ideological orientation has declined in FAOF while the business orientation has increased its foothold.

6.1 Ideological discourse

In the ideological discourse, morality is the central reference point, rather than economics or money. I have labelled this discourse as an ideological discourse to emphasise the importance of the organic farming ideology in this discourse. By organic farming ideology I mean a rather broad set of ideas concerning a good way of farming land and looking after animals as constructed by the organic farming movement (comp. Benford & Snow 2000, 613). Passion is central in ideology: ideology taps emotion; in sociologist Daniel Bell's (1960, 400) words, it "fuses [emotional] energies and channels them into politics". In other words, in this discourse emotionally charged and moral language as well as passionate political engagement play an important role in describing organic livestock production and farm animal welfare.

6.1.1 Constructing "ideological farmers"

It is very typical in FAOF's texts to use "business" and "ideology" as conceptual counterparts. Texts include a broad range of binary oppositions, such as "market organic" vs. "local organic", representing "ideology" vs. "pocket calculator", "ideology" vs. "business", "principled organics" vs. "EU-organics". Going to the ideological side of this binary divide, we can note a variety of labelling terms that construct a certain kind of identity for "ideological farmers": "we the teetotals", "old fundamentalists", "organic pioneers", "pioneers", "idealists", "organic ideology people", "we old Ladybird dairy producers", "ideological Ladybird folks" and so on. These labelling terms are used both by farmers who identify themselves as ideologically oriented farmers (which is indicated for instance with the term "we"), but also by other discourse subjects, such as FAOF's employers, reporters, researchers and advisors. The predominant usage of "old" and "pioneering" refers to constructing ideologically oriented organic farmers as those who started organic farming in earlier phases, driven more strongly by ideological motivations rather than by economic motivations as in the case of latecomers. Terms such as "ideology", "idealism", "principled", "teetotalism" and "fundamentalism" refers not only to the idea that organic ideals work as a prime motivator to these farmers, but also to the portrayal of these farmers of having an aspiration towards a certain kind of

ideological purity, to practice organic farming in a way that compromises as little as possible the ideals of organic farming. As farmers who identify themselves as ideologically oriented farmers can refer to themselves as “fundamentals” or “teetotals”, these terms are often used in a rather self-ironical ways, rather than in pejorative ways. Ideological farmers are also often connected to Ladybird certification: ideologically oriented farmers are associated with pioneering organic producers who used to follow Ladybird standards before the introduction of the Council Regulation, which included certain less stringent rules, as I will discuss in more detail below.

Farmers who position themselves as ideologically oriented farmers can make a clear distinction between themselves and new, more economically oriented farmers. Certain organic principles are portrayed as highly important to them, while new farmers appear to be more willing to compromise these principles for economic reasons. These new farmers who are not “that deeply ideological organic folks” (iv, FAOF expert advisor) can represent some kind of deterioration in the integrity of organic farming; they can seek for economic advantages from organic farming whilst employing the lowest standards possible and “cross the fence there where it is lowest” (iv, FAOF volunteer).

In this discourse organic farming represents a value-based choice. Health and animal welfare play an important role in farmers’ reasons to convert to organic farming and to continue practising organic farming. I now turn to discuss these rationales in more detail.

Health values

The ideas of health have played an important role in organic farming from the early years of its development. The holistic understanding of health has been a key idea in the movement: the healthiness of the soil, plants, animals and people have been viewed to be mutually interdependent (e.g. Boehncke 2004, xix). Nowadays, these ideas of health have been well codified in the Principle of Health in the IFOAM’s Principles of Organic Agriculture and in organic livestock production standards, which emphasise the preventive healthcare of animals (see section 3.1).

Likewise, studies of pioneering organic farmers clearly document the fact that that health is a central reason for their decision to go organic. These farmers have been concerned about the deterioration of the soil resulting from the usage of artificial fertilisers and plant protective agents as well as the minimal crop diversity in conventional farming. They have also expressed a strong appreciation for healthy, residue-free food products and an aspiration to produce healthy food for themselves and

their family. They have felt an aversion towards the use of “poisons”, and that their health has deteriorated because the chemicals have been used on their own farms. (Luoto et al. 1996, 67; Mononen 2008, 86–89; Susiluoma 1993, 40–42.) In FAOF’s texts, organic livestock producers described similar kinds of health motives: they may have been concerned about the use of plant-protective agents (e.g. they had suffered from allergy symptoms when handling them) and they believed “poisons” to be harmful to their own and their family’s health.

However, previous studies on pioneering farmers have tended to focus on the crop side of organic production, and less attention has been given to the importance of livestock health in farmers’ reasons for conversion. Some studies (Padel 2001, 46; Susiluoma 1993, 40–42) have noted that the deterioration in the health of animals has been an important reason for some pioneering farmers to convert to organic production, but this issue has not received specific attention in the literature. In FAOF’s texts, animal health turned out to be an important issue when farmers talked about their reasons for converting to organic farming.

Firstly, conventional farming is portrayed as causing deterioration in animal health due to its high productivity requirements. In conventional farming, it appears, animals are farmed in a highly productive manner at the expense of their health, and they “are worn out” (iv, FAOF volunteer). Putting animals through intensive production (e.g. feeding animals with highly concentrated feedstuffs) causes them to develop various diseases, such as mastitis and foot problems. Organic farming is portrayed as providing an alternative to this model of intensive production. In organic farming animals can be spared from high productivity requirements, so that they can stay healthier and endure longer in production. The issue of animal health is portrayed strongly as a moral question: it is morally questionable to inflict suffering upon animals for economic and productivity reasons.

I think that milking and wearing out an animal is a bit unethical, as at some point the animal breaks down. There is no sense in this, in my opinion. (Iv, FAOF volunteer)

In this health discourse, organic farming is represented as a deliberate choice “for the health of animals”. Farmers may report that they were in a deadlock situation in conventional farming: animals produced high outputs, but their health had become very poor, and even antibiotic treatments did not help to control diseases any more. The farmer may have consciously chosen to have lower productivity levels (e.g. by giving more roughage and less concentrated feedstuffs), so that the health of their animals could improve.

“We were truly intensive farmers, but that path came to an end quickly. We looked after cows using the best techniques. They provided lots of milk, but they did not fare well, and we didn’t either. – –”, Eija Keskitalo tells. – –The Keskitalo couple has moved away from the mainstream. They have reduced the number of cows and been satisfied with lower production levels. – – “The health of the animals is good when we do not demand too much from them. We do know all the tricks to increase their production levels”, says Eija Keskitalo. (Organic dairy farmer in Seppälä LL 2/00)

In addition to lowering the productivity requirements, the farmer may have also made other investments in the health of animals. For instance, the farmer may have noted that the condition of animals has worsened when they have been given feedstuffs produced with artificial fertilisers and plant-protective agents, and this then motivated the farmer to start producing feed crops using organic methods. Similarly, the farmer may have provided increased exercise opportunities for animals in order to promote their health. Often farmers note that these investments in livestock health have actually improved the condition of animals: the occurrence of mastitis, acetone disease and milk fever may have declined, or there has been a reduced requirement for veterinary services.

Cows prefer to eat grass under fences and round the stones, in spots that have not been applied with artificial fertilisers. “I started to think that the grass there must be better than the fertilised grass. And they do not eat at all grass in those spots applied twice with fertilisers”, Bjarne and Stina Back noticed already in year 1979. – – They wanted to stop using artificial fertilisers when they found out that after they provided “non-fertilised” feedstuffs to their cows, the occurrence of acetone disease declined. (Organic dairy farmers in Koskimies, FAOF’s Jubilee Publication)

Organic cows fare well [subtitle] – – Stockman Jari Aaltonen says that organic methods have a positive effect on the welfare of animals. Their muscles are in a better condition when they can move around all-year, and also foot illnesses are prevented. (Article on an agricultural school in Ketola LL 5/05)

Although the health discourse is permeated with moral arguments which deplore the infliction of diseases on animals and “wearing them out” in intensive production, this discourse is not without reference to farming economy. The deterioration in the health of animals also threatens the farmer’s economy. Geographer Tuija Mononen (2008, 86–88) identified similar kinds of driving forces among pioneering organic farmers in her interview study in relation to the soil health: the soil impoverishment had led to a decline in crop yields, so that the farmer was forced to do something (e.g. to start using crop rotations or to give up chemical control agents) to increase the yields again. As Mononen notes, in organic farming literature there is a tendency to construct a clear boundary between pioneering farmers and new farmers, but this boundary is not always as clear-cut. Although health, animal welfare and environmental motives are important to pioneering farmers, they still operate in an economic environment, and these farmers have to take into account economic considerations too.

Although organic producers also emphasise the economic aspects of investing in animal health, the economics of organic farming is still portrayed as being based on a different economic logic than that of conventional farming. In conventional farming, it appears, the productivity of animals is approached with a relatively short-term perspective: animals produce “in high levels and fast” (iv, FAOF expert advisor) and much attention is focused upon the annual productivity of animals. In contrast, in organic farming there is an emphasis on “long-term approach instead of instant profits” (organic beef farmers in Vornanen LL 2/01). Investing in the health of animals helps to increase their longevity and long-term productivity, and even if the annual production of animals can be low compared to conventional farming, their life-time production can be very high. It appears economically fully rational to invest in the longevity of animals – “it is *rational* to be satisfied with lower productivity if animals produce for longer” (organic dairy farmers in Jansson LL 4/02, emphasis added).

[Organic dairy farmer] Tuula Pietilä reminded – – “[I]t is not worth aiming at the cutting edge in milk production levels. Returns improve when the cows live longer and when they stay healthier.” (Rantanen LL 8/02)

The aim is to have long-living and enduring cows. Currently the average calving rate is three, and the aim is to increase the age of cows. Hulina has given birth already eight times. (Organic dairy farmers in Rantanen LL 4/03)

Geographer Heikki Susiluoma (1993, 21) identified a similar kind of long-term economic approach among pioneering organic farmers he interviewed: investments in improving the soil is reflected in the crop yields only after a few years of converting to organic farming, so the organic farmer needs to wait patiently for his/her investments in the soil to bring the results.

Animal welfare

Although the physical healthiness of animals is central in the ideological discourse, much value is given also to other aspects of animal welfare, particularly to the behavioural needs of animals. As in the case of livestock health, producers may have started finding certain animal farming practices in conventional farming problematic from the animal welfare perspective. For instance, the farmer may have felt uncomfortable about keeping cattle in “shackles” (iv, FAOF volunteer) and wanted to switch to a loose-housing system or to provide them with the possibility of going outdoors even in winter-time. Similarly, they may have find it problematic to keep cows tethered while calving and to

separate the calf from the mother soon after the birth, and so consequently they wanted to build a calving pen and extend the weaning age.

Inka and Kalle began to put cows to outdoors after the pasture season in autumn. Since the cows liked being outdoors and since they stayed healthier, the couple continued this practice through the whole winter. They began to feel it was not a good method that cows were calving in stalls, tethered from their heads, so they built a calving pen in the cow house. A small calf could suckle its mother's teets during its first week and sometimes even for longer. (Organic dairy farmers in Suokas LL 6/03)

Organic farming has offered a possibility for these farmers to introduce animal farming methods they find better in terms of animal welfare. For these farmers, animal welfare has been an important factor when they have made decisions concerning animal housing and management practices: “when building the loose housing system we aimed to *think what is the best from the animal's point of view*” (iv, FAOF volunteer). In this way, animal welfare appears inherently valuable to these farmers; it does not have only instrumental value as a way of improving the productivity of animals and reducing the healthcare costs. Animal welfare lays strong moral obligations upon farmers and requires them to react in a way that “feels right”. This kind of approach to animal welfare is similar to the “ethical value dimension” Vainio and colleagues (2007, 26–27) identified among farmers they interviewed: the promotion of animal welfare was intrinsically valuable to these farmers. As an organic egg producer puts it, “we want to look after animals so that we can practice livestock production *with a good conscience*” (quoted in Juurikainen LL 1/02). In this way, organic farming appears as a “value-based choice” to these farmers.

When Mikko and Sanni Vestman were planning a new cow house, it was self-evident to build a barn in which animals could perform their species-specific behaviour. – – They would have wanted to provide an outdoor access to animals in winter-time in any case, even if they had chosen not to convert their animals to organic production. (Organic beef farmers in Vornanen LL 2/01)

Tarmo Leppälä stresses that organic production is also a value-based choice for the family, and organic methods give a good education for children. Animal welfare is one of the important values [in organic farming]. As it is stated in the farm's brochure, “Leppälä's organic pigs can behave in a piggish way”. – It is nice to observe when pigs have space to move around and you can see that they thrive, says Leppälä. (Organic pig farmer in Ketola LL 6/05)

After converting to organic farming, some farmers report having noticed clear improvements in the welfare of their animals: animals “do really appear faring better” (iv, FAOF representative), and “you can see that they behave in their species-specific ways” (iv, FAOF volunteer).

Much attention was given to the comfort of cows when the cow shed was being designed. All stalls contain thick stall-carpets and plenty of litter. – – In the barn the whole atmosphere is peaceful. Cows

are laying and ruminating calmly, and they have not had any confrontations between each other. Cows are clean and they have a cow brush for their own use. (Tikkanen LL 1/02)

Improved welfare of animals gives also a certain kind of moral relief to farmers and improves their work satisfaction. Instead of feeling uneasy about certain animal management practices, they can now feel happy about working at a farm where animals appear to fare well.

It [animal welfare] is in my opinion one of the most important things in organic farming. It is great to do your work when animals fare well and when you can see that they behave in their species-specific ways. (Iv, FAOF volunteer)

In this discourse, organic farming is clearly distinguished from conventional farming: animals appear to fare in many ways better in organic farming than in conventional farming. The welfare situation of animals in conventional farming can be portrayed in a highly negative manner. For instance, it is described how in mainstream farming animals live in a confined space, they do not have much access to go outdoors and they are forced to stand on fully slatted floors.

Customers are interested in knowing how animals have been raised and fed and whether or not they have had an outdoor access. It is easy to answer to these questions when the meat comes from your own farm. — “If a packet of sausages contained a photo picturing how an organic pig had been raised as compared to a conventional pig, many people would re-think [animal farming methods]. It is possible to raise double the number of pigs in a conventional piggery than in an organic piggery of the same size”, says Luhtala. (Organic pig farmer in Ketola LL 1/05)

6.1.2 Ideological discourse and animal welfare standards

I have reviewed above the farmers’ orientation toward animal welfare in the ideological discourse and noted how animal health and welfare values play an important role in farmers’ reasons to convert to organic farming. Now I turn to review arguments concerning animal welfare requirements in organic standards. I explore what kinds of positions actors take concerning animal welfare requirements and how they support, defend and justify these positions, and concomitantly, criticise the counter positions.

In FAOF’s texts it is widely acknowledged that organic standards always contain a certain degree of compromise and that all ideals cannot be fully included in the standards. When developing animal welfare standards, there is a need to take into account the farmer’s economic interests, the state of the input markets (e.g. the availability of organic feedstuffs and youngstock), the knowledge level (e.g. research on the welfare implications of certain animal management practices) and the availability of certain technologies (e.g. certain animal breeds). Organic standards cannot be so

stringent that they prevent farmers from practising organic farming commercially. Moreover, different ideals of organic farming can be in a direct conflict with each other. For instance, consumers may want food products to include minimal amounts of medicine residues, but restrictions in the use of medicines may create risks to animal welfare. Hence, there is a need to find compromises between different interests in the standards-setting process. (Comp. Lockeretz & Lund 2003, 203; Padel et al. 2004, 62–63.)

Although there is a wide agreement in FAOF that not all ideals can be included in organic livestock production standards, there are highly diverging opinions with respect to which ideals of organic farming can be compromised in the practical standards-setting process. In the ideological discourse, organic standards are constructed as a tool to achieve the animal welfare aims of organic farming. They do not appear as unpleasant rules, which restrict the farmer's action space and with which the farmer is forced to live. Rather, organic livestock standards should be continuously improved, so that they can help to achieve the aims of organic farming better in future. Organic livestock standards should become increasingly stringent when organic markets develop, new technologies become available and the knowledge level in the sector increases. With high animal welfare standards, organic farming can function as a forerunner in the promotion of animal welfare in the livestock production sector in general.

In an optimal situation, methods that promote [animal] welfare would be tested in organic farming. As more experience was gradually gained from those methods, they could also be adopted in conventional farming. But there is a risk that – as organic production expands, it starts to attract new actors who perhaps do not deeply share the organic farming ideology. And maybe this can lead to a situation where the difference [between organic and conventional farming] becomes smaller. And in my opinion it is rather dangerous for the future of organic farming; *organic standards should become better all the time.*¹⁷ (Iv, FAOF expert advisor)

“Nature” and “naturalness” are central argumentative resources when certain organic livestock production standards or animal management practices are supported. FAOF's texts are permeated with references to nature and naturalness as well as to species-specific behaviour / physiology / needs of animals. Almost every piece of text dealing with organic livestock production includes references to the natural life of animals. Examples of such statements include “pigs are allowed to live a piggish life”, “it is natural to pigs to root ground”, and “an animal should have a possibility to perform species-specific, natural movements”.

¹⁷ I have italicised pieces of texts I have wanted to emphasise when reporting my findings. These italicisations do not appear in the original Luomulehti articles and they do not indicate any emphasising tone in the interviews.

Central factors contributing to animal welfare include a possibility to go outdoors and graze. Outdoors an animal can perform its *natural* behaviour patterns, such as its grazing, eating and resting behaviour as well as herd behaviour and grooming behaviour. It can also live according to a certain day rhythm. *In nature*, animals move around a good deal. Pasture is *natural* nourishment to cattle, and in pasture an animal can select the plants and the parts of those plants it wants to consume. (FAOF Director, Peltomäki LL 7/04)

I further illustrate this naturalness discourse by focusing on the case of the milk feeding of calves. A basic principle in organic farming has been to provide “species-specific feedstuffs” to animals – i.e. feedstuffs that they are adapted by evolution to consume. Hence, FAOF’s standards have disallowed the usage of animal-derived products, except milk-derived products, for ruminants, which are biologically herbivorous animals, and governmental standards have continued prohibiting slaughter by-products to be included in the feedstuffs of animals. This prohibition has implied that industrial milk substitutes have not been given to calves since they include animal fats¹⁸. This rule has enjoyed much support in FAOF’s discussions. Herbivorous, omnivorous and carnivorous animals are regarded as basic natural categories, and crossing them – transforming an herbivorous animal to an omnivorous animal – appears highly unnatural. In addition to this integrity view, “species-specific feedstuffs” for ruminants have been supported also with consequentialist arguments: not following nature’s course can create harmful effects to animals or people since humans cannot fully predict nature’s reactions. Thus, it was argued that calves could suffer from industrial milk substitutes because animal fats were “alien” to their body. Similarly, feeding herbivorous animals with animal ingredients was associated with the BSE epidemic, which has caused health risks also to humans.

It is also ethical that cows are not supplied with any ingredients that include cattle. – – In Finland we have these milk substitutes, such as Startti, which include fats from cattle [correctly pig fats]. In organic farming it has never been allowed, so mad-cow disease has not occurred in organic farming, it never has with organic standards. It is also unethical. Feeding issues are also very important, so, for instance, animals are not provided feedstuffs that include the same animal species. *A cow is herbivorous, not carnivorous nor omnivorous, and one should respect this.* (Iv, FAOF volunteer)

Similarly, naturalness was an important reference point when there was discussion concerning the milk feeding of calves with “natural milk”. Council Regulation introduced a new requirement for feeding calves with natural milk for at least for three months. This created new challenges for Finnish organic cattle farmers as the old Ladybird standards did not require giving natural milk to calves for any extended period (except they required giving colostrum milk for calves in the first

¹⁸ For instance Valio’s Startti-products, which have over 80 percent market share in Finland (Valio No date), include pig fats. Content lists of Startti-products can be found on Valio’s Internet site: http://www.valio.fi/portal/page/portal/Valioyritys/Yritystieto/Maidontuotanto/startti_correct_ja_helunan_heratys_tuotteet27072006140417/startti_tuotteet01082006101205 (Accessed 14/11/2009).

days after the birth). Organic dairy and beef farmers opposed this rule since it implied increased production costs and required new housing arrangements (see section 6.2.2).

However, this rule was also supported in FAOF's texts by referring to the "naturalness" of the milk feeding of calves. Industrial milk substitutes did not appear "natural", while cow's milk was the species-specific milk for calves. As calves are "naturally" adapted to consume cow's milk, their health and wellbeing improves when they can consume it.

Milk is to a calf its *natural* beverage [title] – – Industrial milk substitutes are not *natural* nourishment to cattle because they include plant- and animal-derived fats and synthetic vitamins. – – A calf can optimise its hereditary growth potential when it consumes milk. This is *natural* since a newly born calf is monogastric like a pig. Full milk coagulates in the best way [in a calf's stomach]. (FAOF livestock officer, Peltomäki LL 7/01)

In FAOF's texts there was also discussion concerning different methods of providing natural milk to calves, such as extended weaning ages, foster cows, manual feeding and milk-feeding automats. Extended weaning ages and foster cow systems were supported on moral grounds as a "natural" method in calf management. For instance, it was pointed out how calves can get milk in a "natural way" and their "suckling instinct is satisfied" when they are placed with foster cows.

Calves raised with foster cows get milk *in a natural way* and often enough. The strong suckling instinct is satisfied, and behavioural disorders can disappear. – – It [the foster cow system] is a very competitive and *humane alternative* compared to other calf management systems – particularly in organic farming. (Konsti LL 5/2002, referring to a master's thesis on foster cow systems)

The centrality of nature in FAOF's texts is not surprising since animal welfare has been framed mainly in terms of the natural life of animals in organic farming. When I discussed different definitions of animal welfare in section 2.3, I noted that the natural living approach is a main conceptualisation of animal welfare alongside the subjective experience approach (in which animal welfare is related to the feelings of animals) and the biological functioning approach (in which animal welfare is related to the normal functioning of animals' biological systems) (Fraser et al. 1997, 190–199; Lund 2006, 73). The natural living approach emphasises the opportunities of animals to express their natural behaviour, to get natural feedstuffs and to live in environments that mimic the biotope to which the animal is adapted by evolution to reside (Lund 2006; see also Segerdahl 2007, 168–169).

The importance of the natural living perspective in organic farming is already indicated in the general organic farming standards. In the IFOAM Principles of Organic Agriculture it is stated, as I already quoted above, “[A]nimals should be provided with the conditions and opportunities of life that accord with their physiology, *natural behavior* and well-being”. Similarly, based on their analysis concerning the values of organic farming represented in the key organic farming literature, philosopher Vonne Lund and colleagues (2006, 80) note that in organic agriculture animal welfare is defined in terms of natural living (see also Segerdahl 2007, 168–169). Likewise, studies of organic livestock farmers indicate that they tend to view animal welfare in terms of the animals’ ability to express natural behaviour (Bock & van Huik 2007; Lund et al. 2004b, 172; van Huik & Bock 2006). In this way, organic farmers’ conceptualisation of animal welfare appears to differ from that of conventional farmers who seem to give less importance to the natural behaviour of animals, viewing animal welfare more in terms of the basic biological needs of animals (e.g. the water and food intake of animals and climatic conditions in the animal sheds) (Bock & van Huik 2007, 937).

The strong importance of the natural living perspective in organic livestock production is probably related to the fact that “nature” is a core reference point in organic farming in general (comp. Segerdahl 2007, 168). The importance of nature in organic farming is already manifested in the Finnish counterpart of the term “organic farming” – “luonnonmukainen” (“nature-compliant” farming) – which denotes aspirations to follow or mimic nature (see section 3.1). The organic farming movement has promoted the ideas of “mimicking nature”, “following nature’s course”, “working in collaboration with nature”, producing food “in a natural way” and operating according to the principles of the “nature’s economy” in agricultural practices (see e.g. Hansen et al. 2006; Verhoog et al. 2003). For instance, nature has been presented as a friend or a partner, rather than an enemy, with which the farmer should collaborate: enhancing certain natural processes (e.g. biodiversity at the farm) can be beneficial not only to nature, but also to agricultural production. Similarly, in the organic farming movement, the farm is often constructed as an agro-ecosystem, so that the farmer needs to take into account the ecological rules in her/his farming practices. (See *ibid.*)

However, the question of nature is rather complex in organic livestock production. Meanings of “nature” and “naturalness” are highly contested, as it has been well documented in the social scientific studies on nature–society relations (see e.g. Franklin 2002; Haila & Lähde 2003; Macnaghten & Urry 1998). It is a highly complex concept, “perhaps the most complex word in the language”, as cultural historian Raymond Williams (1988, 219) notes in his classic review of the

notion. Nature means different things in different contexts, and its meanings are constantly produced and reproduced in various social practices (e.g. Macnaghten & Urry 1998). Also within the field of organic farming, there are multiple notions of nature, as has been well documented in organic farming studies (e.g. Hansen et al. 2006; Segerdahl 2007, 168; Verhoog et al. 2003). Analysing exhaustively the meanings of nature in FAOF's discourses would be a topic for another thesis. I have reviewed the discourses on "natural life" of animals in organic farming in more detail elsewhere (Kupsala 2009).

6.1.3 "Fly, fly Ladybird"¹⁹ – the ideological importance of the private standard

The discussion on animal welfare standards was importantly linked with the discussion concerning the maintenance of FAOF's Ladybird standard and its relationship to governmental standards. As I discussed more extensively in section 5.2, the role of FAOF's Ladybird standards was subjected to an intense debate when FAOF's standards started diverging from the governmental ones and when the government introduced its new organic label. The question whether FAOF should continue to maintain and develop its own standards and whether its standards should include additional requirements to the governmental ones has, of course, important implications for animal welfare requirements in organic standards. The ideological discourse includes aspirations to continue to maintain FAOF's own standards and Ladybird certification system as well as to keep Ladybird standards more stringent than governmental ones. More stringent private standards are supported on ideological grounds: stringent standards can ensure better that certain organic farming ideals are achieved in actual farming practices.

In the ideological discourse, private organic standards have an important role in codifying the values of the organic farming movement. Private standards appear to differ from the governmental ones in important ways. Governmental standards represent governmental endeavours to regulate a certain "business area" in order to ensure fair competition between farmers and to protect consumers from fraudulent claims. In contrast, private standards represent a codification of movement aims: they are "rules created by farmers and consumers together" (Suokas LL 6/01) that strive for good ways of producing food, cultivating the land and looking after animals. As written in a Luomulehti's editorial, "Organic was not invented by authorities. It was created by producers who wanted to cultivate land in harmony with nature and by consumers who wanted to eat residue-free food" (chief editor, Rantanen LL 1/02). Ladybird is regarded as a central symbol of the movement's values, it is "a representation of our attitudes, our aims" (iv, FAOF volunteer).

¹⁹ FAOF chair, Partanen LL 5/02, "Lennä, lennä leppäkerttu-merkki".

[What] is Ladybird label, it represents, *it is a symbol to what people want, what those people, who are for some reasons interested in organic production, want.* And it is related to a wider issue, so that consumers' and farmers' organisations around the world have a strong *determination*, which has a label, or a symbol, under which they... or *it is like a battle flag*, which is carried in crowds or in demonstrations or wherever. For instance if we went to a WTO demonstration, we would be waving IFOAM's flag and IFOAM's various production labels, and we would demand farming to be connected to the land and that the farmer should get a fair price [for the product] and there would not be any child labour, these kinds of things. (Iv, FAOF volunteer)

Moreover, continuing to maintain private standards implies that organic farmers and consumers can preserve their power to define the meaning of organic farming – what organic farming means in a certain geographical area. The private organic label is not the government's label, distanced from ordinary organic farmers and consumers, but it is “farming folks’ and consumer folks’ own label” (iv, FAOF volunteer). Participatory decision making, consumer–producer-connection and defining organic standards according to local conditions by consumers and farmers together were portrayed as being important principles in the organic movement.

When the Ladybird system is maintained and developed in order to be accredited, *the power in developing organic production stays with the organic folks.* In this situation *we decide by ourselves* – in addition to what the EU regulations require – *what organic farming is* and how we want to develop it. In this way *the farmer's voice is preserved when standards are being created.* (LWG in Auranen et al. LL 3/01)

Furthermore, it was also argued that private organic standards should be comparatively stringent, so that certain environmental, animal welfare and food quality goals could be achieved in organic farming in better ways. The “EU minimum organics” or “EU-level regulative organics” was not portrayed as sufficient. As I noted in section 5.2, Ladybird standards included several additional requirements to the Council Regulation, such as certain composting rules and restrictions in the usage of control agents, and it was viewed that these additional requirements should be maintained in Ladybird standards. Hence, from this standpoint, any proposal to unify Ladybird standards with governmental ones and to profile Ladybird only as a label for Finnish organic production was strongly opposed. “Lowering” the Ladybird standard to the level of the Council Regulation would have meant a significant downgrading of the meaning of organic farming.

As a condition to use the Ladybird label, farms and manufacturing companies should continue to follow Ladybird standards that are higher than the EU regulation. – – Organic farming that follows Ladybird standards rather than the EU regulation accomplishes better natural and environmental protection aims [of organic farming] and better meets the consumers' demand for residue-free and safe food. (Comment from Saimaa's Region Organic Farming Society, LL 3/03)

The debate concerning the additional requirements in Ladybird standards was mainly related to organic crop production. In particular, even when FAOF still maintained the old Ladybird standards, composting rules and the issue of “industrial manure” were highly debated topics in FAOF. However, the controversy concerning additional requirements also included references to organic livestock production. Governmental regulations did not include any feed self-sufficiency requirements in pig and poultry farming and any requirement to use regional feedstuffs. This was regarded as diverging fundamentally from the basic principles of organic farming. As a FAOF’s volunteer said in an interview, “The requirement to use regional feedstuffs was for many of us in Finland a self-evident rule, so we wondered *what kind of organic it is then* if it is not put there [into the Council Regulation]”. Similarly, as regards to animal welfare standards, the Council Regulation did not include any requirements concerning calving pens, minimum weaning ages and teat buckets for calves like FAOF’s old Ladybird standards, and this again was viewed to lower the standards in important ways.

As regards to the species-specific care of animals, in dairy production there is no longer much difference [between organic and conventional production]. I mean there is no longer – *the requirement level was lowered enormously* [in the Council Regulation]. And for instance – – in the old days [in the Ladybird standards] it was stated that there had to be a calving pen and that a calf should stay with its mother for at least five days. Nowadays there is nothing else but free-calving. – – It just doesn’t mean anything. (Iv, FAOF volunteer)

Hence, some actors in FAOF supported the idea of keeping certain additional requirements in Ladybird standards and also in the livestock side of organic production. There were proposals to include the requirements concerning regional feedstuffs, feed self-sufficiency rates, calving pens and minimum weaning ages in the new Ladybird quality certification system (e.g. Saimaan luomu comment 1/4/2003; Leppis-brand WG proposal 22/11/2003).

However, arguments for maintaining the old Ladybird certification system and for keeping additional requirements in the Ladybird standards started to play an increasingly weaker role in the organisation. Suggestions to maintain the annual inspection in the Ladybird certification did not go through in AGMs, neither did the Leppis-brand working group’s proposals to include several additional requirements to the new Ladybird quality certification system (see section 5.2). The eroding of Ladybird as a distinguishable private organic standard was viewed with concern by movement members. As a central symbol of the movement values, Ladybird meant more than a mere certification mark. It had a high “emotional value” (iv, FAOF representative) for many movement members – it was a “heart thing for many in the core of organic production” (FAOF

chair, Partanen LL 3/03). Similarly, Ladybird had an important “historical value” (iv, FAOF representative): many pioneering movement members had put a great deal of effort into developing organic farming and the Ladybird standards with a keen desire to promote good ways of farming land and caring for animals. In this way, Ladybird had a “dignified history” (chief-editor, Ketola LL 6/03) or a “noble history” (iv, FAOF volunteer) and “many organic farming pioneers’ basic principles are crystallised within it” (chair, Partanen LL 1/04).

It [Ladybird] has a very strong emotional bond and perhaps a certain kind of emotional value, historical value, so that it would not be possible to demolish it. There is a certain group [of farmers] who have always used it in their products – they still want that the label must appear there [in the products]. (Iv, FAOF representative)

The decision to transfer the Ladybird to the quality label, to suspend annual inspections and to leave out certain old Ladybird requirements from the minimum requirements of the new quality label (see section 5.2) meant for many the corrosion of the Ladybird standard – its “funeral”, its “killing” and “hammering down” (iv, FAOF volunteer). Instead of appearing extensively in organic products as a beautiful symbol of organic values and as a signifier of a certain organic quality, it has merely become FAOF’s logo. Leaving out certain requirements from the Ladybird standard meant that it became meaningless and empty: “it does not mean [anything anymore]” (iv, FAOF volunteer). Emptying Ladybird of its ideological content and discontinuing the deployment of resources for its development was regarded with feelings of sadness by pioneering Ladybird producers.

Nowadays Ladybird is just a logo on FAOF’s notepapers, FAOF’s envelopes, FAOF’s transparencies, it does not mean anything as such. Many are unaware that it has a certain kind of noble history in a way – [In IFOAM’s publications] it has been put under FAOF, that it is our own national label, the own label of farming and consumer folks, but it has nothing to do with this any more. (Iv, FAOF volunteer)

I had to recover for a year after Ladybird was killed. I am still bitter, to put it mildly, that it was not kept alive, but instead hammered down. – I would have wished that Ladybird could have continued to include certain criteria, because it has a certain group of users, and consumers know it. So I think it was very sad that its rules were trampled on. Nothing is written there any more – In my opinion it was Ladybird’s funeral. – No one does anything with what Ladybird is nowadays. (Iv, FAOF volunteer)

To summarise, in this section, I have discussed the construction of the meanings of animal welfare in the ideological discourse. I have argued that in this discourse, morality is the key reference point, rather than business or markets. Organic farming is supported with health-based arguments: the health of the farmer, his/her family, nature, soil, plants and animals appear as important reasons for converting to organic farming and for continuing to practise organic farming. Although farming

economics have an important place in animal health issues alongside with moral concerns, organic livestock farming is still portrayed as following a different economic logic than conventional farming, aiming for long-term productivity and the longevity of animals rather than high short-term productivity. Health reasons are accompanied with animal welfare reasons: farmers have changed their animal farming practices to improve the welfare of their animals. Animal welfare has value in itself, rather than only instrumental value in improving the productivity of the farm. In the discussion about animal welfare standards, stringent animal welfare standards are supported on moral grounds. In particular, “nature” or “naturalness” are central reference points when certain animal welfare standards or measures are supported. As regards to Ladybird standards, in the ideological discourse there are aspirations to continue maintaining FAOF’s own Ladybird certification system as well as to keep Ladybird standards more stringent than governmental ones in order to achieve certain organic farming ideals more effectively. Ladybird is considered to be a central symbol of movement aims concerning good ways of producing food, cultivating the land and looking after animals. Moreover, it is argued that with the private standards organic farmers and consumers can preserve their power to define the meaning of organic farming. Hence, this discourse expressed high levels of concern when the additional requirements were removed from the Ladybird standards. Leaving out certain requirements from it meant that it had become meaningless as it could no longer function as a central symbol of the movement values. Various actors use this discourse. It is mainly used by organic farmers and interviewed FAOF volunteers, and to some extent by advisors and animal welfare scientists.

6.2 Market-oriented discourse

While in the ideological discourse morality and ideology are key reference points, the market-oriented discourse represents the opposite pole in argumentation: it approaches organic livestock farming mainly in terms of economics, business and markets. I start describing this discourse by first analysing the construction of the “business-oriented farmer” and his/her orientation to animal welfare, arguing that economic reasons appear as prime reasons for these farmers to convert to organic livestock production.

6.2.1 Constructing “market-oriented” farmers

A variety of business-derived words are used when constructing the identity of market-oriented farmers – farmers with an “economic standpoint”, “market-spirited” farmers, “business-organic” farmers, “new utility seekers”, “baby boomer subsidy-organic farmers” and farmers “representing a

pocket calculator”. All these terms indicate that economic issues play an important role in farmers’ reasons to practice organic farming. Similarly, terms such as “new” and “baby boomers” indicate that market-oriented farmers are those “boom time” farmers who converted to organic farming in the 1990s when organic subsidies were introduced.

In this discourse, farmers emphasise economic motives as their reasons for converting to organic farming. In particular, it is pointed out that farmers started thinking organic farming as a viable option when Finland began to join the EU. The EU membership created new economic threats to farmers due to increased costs of farming inputs and the decrease in producer prices. If farmers were not willing to respond to these threats by expanding and intensifying their farming production, specialising in organic farming provided another option to survive. The EU membership brought well funded organic farming subsidies, and at the same time organic farming required using fewer external inputs (such as artificial fertilisers) that had become increasingly expensive.

More than 10 years ago the Thölix’ brothers were ordinary intensive producers at their grain and dairy farm. But as the letters “EU” started to frequently recur in newspaper headlines in the early 1990s, the brothers began to anticipate the upcoming situation. “Already then we were sure that Finland would join the EU. If farms were to survive, they would have to specialise. Already in 1992 we decided to convert to organic farming and adapt in advance. – –”, Stefan Thölix recalls. (Organic beef farmers in Luukkanen LL 3/00)

However, although economic reasons appear as the prime motive for these farmers to convert to organic farming, their importance is emphasised to a varying degree. At one end of the spectrum, economic considerations appear almost as the sole reason to practice organic farming. There has been nothing “ideological” in going to organic farming – organic farming does not appear at all as an “ideological choice”, but as a rational choice based purely on economic calculations. For these farmers, it would be possible to convert back to conventional farming if organic farming would cease to be adequately profitable – Mononen (2008, 125) made a similar finding among “market network” farmers in her interview study.

Luhtala says that organic is not an ideological choice for them; they are interested in it as long as there is some sense with it. “As a small player, we have to somehow stand out from larger ones, and organic is a good way to do it”. (Organic pig producer and a small-scale meat seller in Ketola LL 1/05)

Production has been profitable. Organic production is not a way of life, but an economic and well-thought-out way of producing milk. (Organic dairy producers in Kärkkäinen, LL 5/05)

Perhaps more often, however, economic reasons are accompanied with other reasons, such as environmental and health reasons and aspirations to find new professional challenges. Although economic reasons play the most important role in farmers' decision to start organic farming, farmers can also have been concerned for instance for their own health when applying control agents, or they may have thought about "ecological factors" when making their farming decisions.

The new farm owner felt strongly that it was not a right choice to use fertilisers and poisons. "Already at that time consumers gave a clear message that farming pollutes the environment and does not produce residue-free food. When I got myself a strong allergy reaction from seed disinfectants, that path came to an end quickly. However, perhaps the biggest impetus for conversion appeared when Liminka's Co-op Dairy decided to start processing organic dairy products in autumn 1990. So, *the decision was market-oriented right from the start.*" (Organic dairy producer in Karttimo LL 6/00)

Aila and Jouko recall their thoughts half a decade ago when farmers had to become involved in the EU's agricultural system and adapt to its conditions. "It was already possible to foresee a strong decline in producer prices, so a high yield was no longer the sole factor contributing to the profitability of the farm", say the couple. Conversion subsidies were good enough, so that the decision [to convert to organic farming] was made by carefully pondering ecological and economic factors. (Organic dairy producers in Latvala LL 4/00)

Explanations of economic motives for converting to organic farming given in FAOF's texts seem to accord well with the research on organic farmers' motives. As I noted in section 3.5.1, these studies uniformly indicate that new farmers tend to emphasise economic reasons for conversion more than was the case for pioneering farmers: organic farming subsidies and price premiums as well as reduced costs in the consumption of farming inputs appear to have attracted these farmers to the sector (e.g. Flaten et al. 2006, 177–179; Hall & Mogyoródy 2001, 401, 414–417; Mononen 2008, 121–125). However, although market-oriented farmers tend to put much value to economic motives, these farmers seem also to regard the environmental, health and animal welfare benefits of organic farming as important reasons for conversion, and this was similarly represented in FAOF's texts (e.g. Best 2008, 101; Flaten et al. 2006, 177–181; Hall & Mogyoródy 2001, 401, 414–417). It seems that there is a good deal of variation in the orientations of new organic farmers: while some put much value in environmental, health and ethical issues, others may have entered into the sector almost solely for economic motives (see Best 2008, 101–102; Mononen 2008, 121–125). This variation in motives could be also identified in FAOF's texts.

Market-oriented farmers are also constructed as professional farmers who have made economically rational choices. A clear distance is taken to any kind of unrealistic idealism, "fundamentalism" or "organic-religiosity" to construct the farmer as an "ordinary" farmer who has taken economically realistic and well-considered choices. Similarly, the professional skills of the farmer are emphasised

in order to distinguish organic farming from any kind of “hobbyism” and “tinkering” it was associated with before.

The Pietilä couple is sincerely satisfied with their decision [to convert to organic farming], without needing to underline the goodness of their way of farming. Neither of them avows his or herself as an “organic-believer”, but their decision was based on other reasons. Ten years ago organic production was a better choice than obligatory fallowing. (Organic dairy farmers in Jansson LL 4/02)

“In Northern Ostrobothnia there is no biodynamic farming or farm-gate selling, but instead full-time ordinary farming that must pay off. Farms are large and farmers want to produce so-called market-organic produce in a rational way – countryside romanticism is left somewhat behind”, says Touko Lisko. (Organic dairy farmer in Karttimo LL 6/00)

In their interview study among Ostrobothnian organic farmers, geographer Ilkka Luoto and colleagues (1996, 70–75, 104–105) noted similar aspirations: some of the interviewed farmers wanted to avoid the stigma of an “idealist nature protectionist” or “bush-bearded idealist”²⁰, but instead they wanted to be seen as “ordinary farmers” and “professional farmers”. Moreover, it is well documented that in the organic sector more widely, the professionalism and economic rationality of organic farming has been emphasised in order to purify its public image from the ideas of “amateurism” and “idealism”. In stereotypical portrayals, pioneering organic farmers have appeared as idealist “back-to-the-landers” who have lacked professional farming skills and who have approached organic farming more as a way of life rather than as a source of income. The entering of professional full-time farmers to the sector helped to “normalise” organic farming and to present it as a “respectable alternative” – as a credible, acceptable and legitimate form of farming that can be taken seriously. This kind of “new organic farming” was not practiced by “village lunatics”, but by professional farmers who wanted to farm their lands profitably and efficiently. (Luoto et al. 1996, 71–77, 103–105; Mononen 2008, 90–92, 121–122.) This kind of change in the image of organic farmers was noted in FAOF’s texts with a positively welcoming tone.

An organic farmer turned from a freak to an accepted person [subtitle]. Still in the mid-1990s converting to organic farming could mean being stigmatised as a village lunatic. However, other farmers soon found out that organic farming was as acceptable as other forms of production. (Ex FAOF chair in Peltomäki, FAOF’s Jubilee Publication)

²⁰ It is typical to use the term “bush-bearded farmers” (*risuparrat*) in the representations of ideological farmers in organic farming discourses. This reproduces a certain kind of masculinist language that is typical in agricultural texts more generally. Finnish terms such as *risuparrat* (bush-bearded farmers), *talonpojat* (yeomen) and *isännät* (male farm owners) construct the farmer primary as a man, ignoring the fact that a certain proportion of farmers are women.

Gradually civil servants and politicians acknowledged that organic farming was a real business. Organic farmers are no longer bush-beards fuelled with ideology, but professional and skilful farmers. (Ex FAOF chair in Paananen, FAOF's Jubilee Publication)

FAOF's texts also include explicit desires to actively change the public image of organic farmers. When organic farming is purified from the stigmas of ideologism, religiosity and tinkering, ordinary consumers and professional farmers can also become interested in organic production.

For many, the threshold to buy organic products can be high if the image of organic farming resembles religion. In this situation, the question is not about choosing a product, but an ideology – – Again, an image of smallness or amateurism does not attract entrepreneurs. For them, farming and food manufacturing are a means of earning bread for themselves, for their employers and for their owners. Decisions are not based only on values and visions, but also on kilograms and Euros. (The director of Finfood Luomu, Kottila LL 2/02)

Moreover, organic farming is portrayed as following the same business logic as conventional farming – organic farming can also be “efficient” and “competitive”. In this discourse, there is an aspiration to keep production levels high – converting to organic farming does not need to imply a decline in the milk production levels or growth rates of animals. This is in clear contrast with the ideological discourse, in which farmers express aspirations to spare animals from high productivity requirements so that they can stay healthier and endure longer in production. In contrast, in the market-oriented discourse, the discussion concerning the health effects of high productivity levels is fully absent.

A-tuottajat [“A-Producers”, a meat delivery company] awarded the Farmer of the Year prizes in the Cattle Farm Exhibition in Tampere, and the award-winners included six organic meat producers. – – Raimo Murtoniemi, who is responsible for purchasing organic beef in A-Tuottajat, is satisfied with the results of the organic farms. “This success demonstrates that *it is possible to produce beef competitively with organic feedstuffs and rules. One can see that also organic farming can be efficient and that it produces quality meat.*” (Koskimies LL 7/04)

Cows in Muuruvesi's Agricultural School give milk surrounded by the latest technology. Efficiency as well as the exactitude of animal care and feeding have produced their results: the average production of nearly 60 cows is close to 10,000 kilograms of milk and 335 kilograms of proteins. “Organic is not an end in itself, but a way of minimising costs”, says Jani Nousiainen, the principal of the Savo Consortium for Education. “We want to show that production, which is efficient, but also sustainable, is rational and productive”. – – Johanna Voutilainen, the forewoman in animal husbandry, speaks about production levels, “Production during the last 12 months is promising; the magic number of 10,000 kg is getting closer. Currently 18 cows give over 10,000 kg milk/year.” (Puustinen LL 6/04)

6.2.2 Market orientation and animal welfare standards

In the market-oriented discourse, organic livestock production standards are approached from an economic framework. Standards do not appear as a certain kind of device to assist the achievement of ideals concerning good animal husbandry, as in the ideological discourse. Rather, in this discourse it is argued that additional animal welfare requirements would increase production costs, without any prospect that these increased costs would be covered by better price premiums or farming subsidies. The economic situation of organic livestock producers appears difficult enough, and there is no desire to increase these difficulties because of more stringent standards.

”Standards are currently difficult enough [to meet]” [subtitle] Should Ladybird-standards be more stringent and above EU-rules? “Certainly they could be in some parts, but I do not see that they could be tougher in livestock production. They are difficult enough [to meet] already now, for instance in pig production.” (Organic beef farmer in Rantanen LL 5/00)

In the market-oriented discourse, the economic losses caused by animal welfare requirements are emphasised. For instance, providing outdoor access to animals may require high building investments and extra labour time as well as diminish the “feed conversion rate” and “growth rate” of animals. Similarly, increased locomotion areas can imply that the “profit per square metre” (an architect in Vornanen LL 2/01) is reduced. Also transforming fully slatted floors to partly covered floors or building new calving pens can be very costly.

In this discourse it is noted that the increased costs caused by animal welfare standards are not compensated by improved prime premiums. It seems that consumers are not ready to pay more for organic products; hence more stringent animal welfare standards do not bring any additional value to organic products. It is frequently noted that organic price premiums are currently way too low to cover all the additional costs. As an organic dairy producer puts it, “pure ideology does not provide maintenance, but the farm is an enterprise” (quoted in Latvala LL 4/00).

It is not that easy to argue to farmers that this [stringent standards] aims to improve animal welfare because in practice very rarely is it reflected in better prime premiums. And on the other hand I feel that a farmer may also wonder whether a consumer in a shop really understands or gives any worth to the farmer making this investment. (Iv, FAOF representative)

Moreover, it was argued that excessively stringent standards prevent organic livestock production from expanding. Since higher production costs due to stringent standards are not compensated with better price premiums (or farming subsidies), new farmers are not attracted to the sector and current farmers can even be driven out of the business. It was noted that compared to crop production,

organic livestock production has remained marginal. Hence, standards should not create even more trouble for organic livestock producers, but rather, they should help to boost the sector out of margins.

Risto thinks that FAOF should work strongly as an interest group for organic farmers. “When we are attempting to influence production standards, we should always make sure that the threshold to convert to organic farming or to stay as an organic farmer does not become too high.” (FAOF chair, organic beef producer, in Koskimies LL 1/05)

This kind of position is similar to the “vision to expand the sector” Guthman (2004a, 169) identified in the discussion on organic standards in California. According to this view, less stringent standards would encourage more farmers to convert to organic farming, which would help to expand the organic sector. This in turn would help to bring down the prices of organic products, making organic products accessible to wider consumer groups and making “organic less of an elite project”. Consequently, the benefits of organic production can be extended to agriculture more widely: wider areas of land can be farmed in a more sustainable way and a larger number of animals can be looked after with better animal welfare standards.

To illustrate this discourse I again focus on the rules concerning the milk feeding of calves as I did in the case of ideological discourse. As I have already noted, the Council Regulation introduced a new requirement for feeding calves with natural milk at least for three months, while old Ladybird standards did not require the giving of natural milk to calves for any extended period. Many farmers opposed this rule since it implied a significant increase in production costs. The milk-feeding required extra labour time and supplying calves with milk that would have been sellable to market. Moreover, dairy farms could no longer sell their calves at a young age, but now needed to find more space for them in the animal shed and put more labour time into calf care. In addition, those organic fattening farms that did not keep dairy cows needed to make new arrangements in order to provide milk to calves if they bought them at young age; they either needed to give milk to calves manually, build an automatic feeding system or buy foster cows.

Milk-feeding of calves has been trumpeted to be expensive. In reality, the additional cost of milk [given to calves] is a few pennies per milk sellable to market, but only if moderate amounts of milk are provided to calves and if it is possible to use milk unsellable to market. – – A more crucial issue is the practical arrangements of milk-feeding and the area needed for calves until three months. Nearly 10 minutes additional labour per calf in a day during one month creates four pennies labour costs per milk litre sellable to market. As an investment, pens for calves do not cost that much, but the problem is that usually there is no space for them inside the existing building. (Advisor, Tolvanen LL 8/00)

Moreover, as in the “vision to expand the sector” position, it was argued that due to the increased production costs, the milk feeding rule could prevent organic dairy and beef production from expanding.

Providing milk to calves freely for three months does not appear to have any economic grounds since full milk is a noticeable cost item. In addition, this research indicates that milk-feeding does not boost the growth of calves enough, so that long, abundant milk-feeding would become economically profitable. *What is most regrettable in this rule of lengthened milk-feeding is that it inevitably slows down the growth in organic milk and beef production as it does not suit our production environment.* (Researches, MTT Agrifood Research Finland, in Huuskonen et al. LL 8/00)

In this discourse animals are portrayed in highly commodified terms. Economic implications of animal welfare requirements are reviewed with highly economic and technical language. Animals are transformed into something that can be quantified and calculated: the productivity of the animal farm is measured by giving detailed attention to every gram the animal is able to produce with certain inputs or to every minute or penny needed in animal rearing. For instance, an assessment is made of how many “labour costs as pennies per milk litre” or how many “minutes of labour time per day” the milk-feeding of calves theoretically requires or what is the “return per square metre” of certain locomotion areas. Similarly, a review can be undertaken about how certain feeding practices influence the “milk production rate per hectare”, in the “milk production return (kg milk / kg feed)” or in the “day growth rate”, “digestion rate” and “feeding efficiency” of animals. The organic farm appears here as any other enterprise – it aims to be competitive and cost-efficient and its business success can be measured with a variety of economic indicators.

The competitiveness of dairy farms is based on the profitability in production and on cost-efficiency. – – [I]n organic dairy farms, the farmer puts in on average 127 working hours per a cow. – – With the annual production of 7,600 kg, an organic farm produces 59.8 litres of organic milk per working hour – – The production cost of organic milk was 65 cents per litre and conventional milk 59 cents per litre. The profitability of organic milk production can be improved by increasing the average production levels [of cows] and, above all, by lowering the production costs of domestic feedstuffs, says development manager Kaisa Tolonen [in ProAgria Association of Rural Advisory Centres]. (FAOF director, Peltomäki LL 4/05)

Thus, animals are constructed as commodities – things exchangeable on the market through money (comp. Sassatelli 2007, 4, 139). In this way, FAOF’s texts follow the highly commodifying economic and technical language that is nowadays so prevalent in the discourses of livestock industry; also in FAOF’s texts, animals appear like machines whose productive capacity should be optimised (comp. Mitchell 2006; Stibbe 2001; Stibbe 2003). FAOF’s texts include plenty of machine metaphors, such as “food intake”, “protein utilisation”, “feed conversion rate”, “digestion rate” and “feeding efficiency”. Similarly, different breeding lines can be compared with each other

like any human-manufactured products, such as washing machines or car models: for instance, the “egg laying percentage” or “hatchability rate” of hens in different breeding lines can be compared. Likewise, the language of manufacturing is typical in this discussion, so that the farm is regarded as a factory producing certain manufactured products, with terms such as the “maximum flock profitability”, “milk production rate per hectare” and the “optimal renewal rate” of animals. Moreover, animals are portrayed as deindividualised items, with expressions such as “batch”, “animal unit”, “the growth rate of the flock” and “live weight kg per square metre”. (Comp. *ibid.*)

6.2.3 Questioning the Ladybird standard

When the status of Ladybird standards and certification was discussed after the introduction of the governmental certification system, some FAOF actors took the view that Ladybird standards should be unified with governmental ones and they should not include any additional requirements. According to this view, the costs caused by more stringent standards would not be compensated with better price premiums as consumers were not ready to pay more for organic products. Farmers had difficulties in getting a sufficient price premium for their products even when following the basic governmental standards. As FAOF’s president of the time wrote, “most of the farmers do not need higher standards than the Council Regulation when marketing their products” (Partanen LL 3/03). In this way, standards “should not be made too stringent”, but “as little labour intensive as possible”, as a representative of the Southern Finland organic society put it in the AGM (quoted in Rantanen LL 3/01). Hence, Ladybird should be differentiated from the governmental Sun-label only as a symbol of Finnish organic products. Imported products could be certified with the Sun label, while the Ladybird certification had been applied only to domestic products (or in the case of processed products, a certain percentage of the ingredients was required to be of Finnish origin).

And in general the tendency here was a bit like ‘Why to do more if less is sufficient?’ – – Or let’s say that one could not foresee any additional price in the additional value created by higher requirements. (Iv, FAOF representative)

Likewise, it was argued that if Ladybird standards include additional requirements, the amount of Ladybird farmers would decline due to the additional costs caused by stringent standards, and consequently, the certification scheme would become marginal. There were even suggestions that if farmers lose an interest in the Ladybird certification, they might leave FAOF altogether and the organisation’s power in the organic sector could weaken.

“Ladybird is becoming increasingly a label that includes ethical production aims in their most idealistic form – and it is good that it is possible to see from something what organic farming really should be. But because of this, it will appear in fewer and fewer products since stringent standards do not allow manufacturers to get enough raw materials. Therefore, the Sun label will inevitably become more common – and it is good that there is at least one label manufacturers can use.” (An AGM representative of Mid-Finland Organic Farming Society in Rantanen LL 8/00)

Moreover, it was argued that since Finnish organic markets are already small, there is little sense in trying to differentiate organic products with different labels. It would be difficult for consumers to understand the differences between the certification systems, and diversity in labels would just confuse them.

There is a discussion constantly going on in the organic sector concerning the right or wrong organics – principled organics, subsidy-organics and EU-organics – even though their all market share reaches hardly one percent. The following of different standards are communicated with different labels, while it is difficult for even the well-informed consumer to understand their disparities. – It is more topical to clarify the dissimilarities between organic and conventional production, rather than highlighting differences between various orientations in organic farming. (The director of Finfood Luomu, Kottila LL 2/02)

There were strong interests in FAOF to profile itself as an organisation for all Finnish organic farmers – “Ladybird farmers”, “Sun farmers” and “Demeter farmers” alike. FAOF should work as a “voice for all the organic folks” (chief editor, Rantanen LL 8/00) and it should “represent credibly the whole organic sector” (LWG in Auranen et al. LL 3/01). Hence, it was noted that the organisation’s operation area is much wider than just Ladybird certification. As the then FAOF chair wrote, “FAOF has an enormous amount of tasks in addition to Ladybird certification. Most of these tasks concern the whole organic production regardless of labels” (Partanen LL 3/00). Moreover, as the amount of Ladybird farmers declined, it was increasingly viewed that the Ladybird certification is not high in the priority order of FAOF’s activities since only a minority of its members use it. FAOF should focus on serving the majority of organic farmers and work harder to improve their working conditions and economic situation.

“One must also see that there are 5,000 organic farmers in Finland, and only a couple of hundred of them have wanted Ladybird inspection. One needs to think what *the most important tasks for FAOF are* and whether FAOF can allocate any resources to serve this couple of hundred of farmers. I want that *FAOF serves those five thousand farmers as well as possible and that farmers do feel that we are promoting their interests* and in this way join FAOF.” (FAOF director in Rantanen LL 3/03)

In particular, in this discourse, lobbying organic farmers’ interests appeared to be one of the most important tasks for FAOF. Instead of continuing to develop its own standard, it was argued, FAOF should focus on promoting organic farmers’ interests. This kind of approach to standards-setting

diverges clearly from the approach in the ideological discourse. As I noted in section 6.1.3, in the ideological discourse private organic standards are portrayed as rules created together by farmers and consumers to help in achieving certain organic farming values in food production. In contrast, in the market oriented discourse, consumers and farmers appear to be more at odds with one another. Standards-setting appears to be based on securing farmers' interests rather than working in collaboration with consumers. In the market-oriented discourse, FAOF is mainly constructed as an interested group, rather than as an ideological organisation that continuously develops private organic standards in order to better achieve the values of the organic farming movement.

For those [regional organic farming societies], in which grain producers have decisive power, fraternising with consumers is a red flag. Farmers regard organic standards as so stringent that the market price does not cover increasing costs. Even a small tightening in organic standards or weakening in [organic subsidy] requisites are perceived as major disadvantages to the business. (Chief editor, Rantanen LL 7/01)

FAOF's customer and membership base started dividing on the issue of what kind of organic production should be practiced. [One group was concerned with] whether it [organic production] had some aims concerning what kind of environment we have, what kind of world we have and what kind of agriculture we have. And the other group thought that we did not need to concern ourselves with those kinds of issues, that FAOF exists because it promotes our things, so that we can gain good subsidies [and that] EU-subsidies do not treat us wrongly. (Iv, FAOF volunteer)

I will examine more the profiling of FAOF as an interest group in section 6.4.

To conclude this section, I have discussed about the meanings of animal welfare in the market-oriented discourse. I have argued that in this discourse, organic livestock farming is approached mainly in terms of economics and business, while moral references have little importance in the argumentation. In the constructions of the "business-oriented farmer", economic reasons appear as the prime motive for conversion. However, these farmers are not constructed as having views which are fully opposed to those of ideological farmers. Although they tend to emphasise economic motives, also the environmental, health and animal welfare benefits of organic farming can be regarded as important reasons for conversion. In this discourse, market-oriented farmers are also constructed as professional farmers who have made economically rationale choices. Organic farming is represented as an efficient and profitable form of farming, and a certain distinction is constructed to any kind of "greenienism" or "organic fundamentalism". Moreover, organic farming appears to have a similar kind of economic logic as conventional farming, aiming to increase the productivity of livestock animals as well as the "cost-efficiency" and "competitiveness" of the farm. Concerning the discussion about animal welfare standards, stringent animal welfare standards are

portrayed in negative terms; it is argued that animal welfare requirements increase production costs, while these costs are not covered by better price premiums or farming subsidies. Similarly, it is argued that the Ladybird standards should not include any additional requirements to the governmental ones as the costs caused by more stringent standards would not be compensated with better price premiums. This discourse, again, has multiple discourse subjects, like the ideological discourse. However, this discourse more strongly represents a “voice from the field”: its main discourse subjects include organic farmers and the active members of the regional organic farming societies who aim to bring out the “realities” of farmers to FAOF’s decision making bodies and employees.

6.3 Animal welfare business discourse

The animal welfare business discourse attempts to reconcile the tensions between ideological and market-oriented discourses. This is a hybrid discourse that coalesces components from both discourses. As in the ideological discourse, animal welfare standards are promoted, but not with the moral arguments made in the ideological discourse, but with economic arguments similar to those in the market oriented discourse. While in the ideological and market oriented discourses animal welfare and economic issues appear to be in a conflicting, trade-off situation, in the animal welfare business discourse this conflict is reconciled, and animal welfare and the farm’s economy appear to be in a win-win situation.

According to this discourse, animal welfare standards and measures can bring economic benefits to the farmer in two ways. Firstly, animal welfare measures can help to boost the productivity of animals and to diminish costs (e.g. veterinary costs) in animal management. Secondly, stringent animal welfare standards can help to build a favourable image of organic livestock production, which can secure an access to “animal-friendly markets” that provide better price premiums for farmers. Similarly, it is argued that Ladybird standards should be more stringent than governmental ones because higher standards bring additional value to organic products, and in this way, improved price premiums. All in all, although this discourse supports stringent organic standards, it is permeated with business language: animal welfare ideals are translated into the economic rhetoric, and they are discussed in economically calculable, monetary terms, while moral rhetoric is virtually lacking.

6.3.1 The economic benefits of animal welfare

In the animal welfare business discourse, animal welfare measures are portrayed as benefiting the farm economy in many ways. For instance, farmers may note that the workload can be reduced thanks to certain animal-friendly farming methods: in free range housing systems the farmer does not need to mix the feedstuffs as the hens do it by themselves; it is easier to clean the stalls when cows are also outdoors in winter time; less labour is needed to feed animals when they can graze out in pasture; and it is easier to monitor the oestrus period of cows in loose housing systems.

The cough tends to be a problem in a stuffy cow shed, so it is good to get the barn empty once a year. Calves clearly cheer up when they can go out. With this system [putting calves out to pasture] I can raise many more animals than inside the cow shed. In addition, I economise on dung spreading since a third of the manure is dropped directly on the pasture. (Beef farmer in Tolvanen LL 3/02)

Similarly, farmers can associate animal welfare with declined costs in animal management (e.g. declined veterinary costs) and with the improved productivity and fertility of animals.

Well, animal welfare means that during their production time they [animals] get as species-specific conditions as possible and the sort of feedstuffs that they do with it, that they fare well, and *it is shown then in good production levels and in this way it is shown to the producer* – – But *organic farming is also a production system, so animal welfare means that animals fare well also from the production perspective.* (Iv, FAOF representative and livestock producer)

In addition to farmers, also veterinarians, advisors, veterinary scientists and animal welfare scientists emphasise the economic benefits of animal welfare measures. In fact, almost every article based on animal welfare research points to the economic advantages of good animal welfare and, concomitantly, economic losses due to poor animal welfare. It is typically noted how a “well-faring animal is an economic and long-living work mate for its keeper” (book review on animal welfare book, Rantanen LL 1/00) and an animal that fares well “produces well and is economic to its owner” (FAOF livestock officer, Peltomäki 3/02). Good animal welfare can imply reduced veterinary costs, lower mortality or replacement rates, improved eating capacities of animals and improved product quality.

Research on production environments also began to develop in Finland. Alongside this a saying “*A healthy animal produces in the best way*” started to change attitudes toward protection of animal health. Production environments were altered in order to prevent injuries and *production losses* caused by them. – – As animal behaviour science became more common, the concept of welfare also became familiar to livestock people. People came to understand that *poor mental welfare can also lead, in the case of animals, to illnesses and consequently to economic losses.* (Professor in veterinary medicine, Saloniemi LL 3/02)

The new professor wants to point out that *it is profitable for livestock farms to invest in animal welfare*. Improved animal welfare creates cost-savings and additional income since *healthier and well-faring animals produce in the best way for their owner*. – – Valros regrets that the expense of investments promoting welfare is emphasised too much. Instead, more attention should be paid to the *cost-savings* created by the investments in the long-term. The number of veterinarian-visits decline, the utilisation of feedstuffs improves and carcass rejection percentages and the mortality-rates diminish. (Interview of an animal welfare professor in Ketola LL 5/04)

Texts based on animal welfare research describe in diverse ways how animal welfare can have positive effects on farm economics: for instance, negative emotions, such as fear, are linked to declining productivity and impaired immune systems in animals; in confined conditions low ranking animals may not be able to eat sufficiently, leading to declining productivity levels; a well-functioning herd diminishes aggressive behaviour among animals, improving the work safety of farmers; when animals can synchronise their eating behaviour, they can also absorb feedstuffs more efficiently; tail-baiting among pigs may lead to injuries and to rejected carcasses in abattoirs; and pain related to feet illnesses diminishes animals' appetite and hence their productivity.

Chronic stress has negative effects on an animal's protein metabolism and energy balance. A lengthened fear-related stress therefore impairs an animal's growth and diminishes its disease-resistance and fertility. – – There is a connection between fear and production. It has been demonstrated that handling animals in a frightening way has decreased production in pigs, cows, broiler chicken and laying hens. – – The bad treatment of pigs impairs growth, postpones the oestrus period, impairs the gestation results, diminishes the size of farrows and increases the mortality among piglets. (Researcher in the Research Centre for Animal Welfare, Raussi LL 7/04)

A cow that lies down is a productive cow, but a legless cow is a useless cow [title]. Taking care of hoofs and legs is crucial for the endurance and productivity of cows. – – What then if cows have skin injuries or changes in hoofs? Not only does a cow feel pain and perhaps limps, the pain diminishes the appetite and causes prolonged stress. It has been estimated that feet pain lowers production by about 10 percent. (Veterinarian, Dredge LL 6/01)

Again, to illustrate this discussion, I go back to the rule concerning the milk feeding of calves, already discussed in the case of ideological and market oriented discourses. As I have noted, the Council Regulation introduced a new requirement for feeding calves with natural milk for at least for three months, whilst the old Ladybird standards did not require giving natural milk to calves for any extended period. While in the market-oriented discourse this rule was resisted due to its assumed economic costs, in the animal welfare business discourse this rule was supported – but again with economic arguments. It was argued that giving natural milk to calves improves their healthiness and consequently leads to declined veterinary costs and to better longevity of animals in the future as dairy cows. Similarly, calves can grow faster when they are given natural milk. Moreover, in the discussion concerning alternative milk-feeding methods, more animal-friendly methods – extended weaning ages and the use of foster cows – were supported by referring to their

economic benefits as compared to manual or automatic feeding. It was noted, for instance, that when the calf is allowed to stay with its mother or with a foster cow, its healthiness and growth rate can improve, the udder health of cows can get better and the farmer's work load can diminish.

It has been observed that usually there are more positive than negative effects when a calf can suck its mother's teats: calves stay healthier, they grow faster, they get pregnant more easily as heifers and they produce more milk in their first lactation period. The udder health of mothers is better and the total production increases. (Research news, collected by Elomestari Inc, LL 7/05)

Dairy farms have had positive experiences from using foster cows. Calves grow better, they stay healthier and less labour-time is needed to give milk to calves. – Several studies have demonstrated that cows, which are both milked and which suckle calves, get mastitis less often than the average cow. (Konsti LL 5/02)

In the studies on farmers' views about animal welfare, it is well documented that farmers tend to associate animal welfare with the productivity of animals: healthy, well faring animals are also viewed as producing well (Bock & van Huik 2007, 937, 939; Vainio et al. 2007, 26–32). This kind of productivist construction of animal welfare diverges clearly from the ideas in the ideological discourse. As noted in section 6.1.1, in the ideological discourse, the promotion of animal welfare is supported with the “ethical value dimension”, to use Vainio's and colleagues' (2007, 26–27) concept; the promotion of animal welfare is viewed as a moral duty and an intrinsically valuable thing. In contrast, in the animal welfare business discourse, the promotion of animal welfare is supported with the “instrumental value dimension”; animal welfare is promoted since it increases the productivity of animals, and hence, improves the farmer's income (ibid. 26). Certainly, studies indicate that organic farmers' views about animal welfare tend to differ from the views of conventional farmers. Organic farmers appear to regard the promotion of animal welfare more as an important moral obligation than conventional farmers. (Bock & van Huik 2007, 937; Lund et al. 2004b, 172.) However, quite obviously, although organic farmers emphasise the natural life of animals as intrinsically valuable, economic results are also important to them (Bock & van Huik 2007, 937). In this way, the same farmer can use both value dimensions when supporting animal welfare measures (Vainio et al. 2007, 26–27).

Similarly, the productivist discourse in animal welfare research is quite predictable since it is an applied science that works within an economic environment. There are expectations that scientists discuss the economic implications of animal welfare measures, and the livestock industry often funds animal welfare research projects. Farming economics provide a central filter through which animal welfare is assessed. Likewise, it seems, as scientists are writing to farmer audiences, they

tend to frame the issue according to what is assumed to be of interest to farmers. Referring to the monetary benefits of animal welfare measures can persuade farmers more than moral arguments as their income is dependent on livestock production.

Constructing the farm's economy to be in a win-win situation with animal welfare is typical of the animal advocacy movement more widely. Early animal protection movements already emphasised the economic benefits of animal welfare measures, arguing, for instance, that the inadequate care of animals reflects in their productivity levels (Nieminen 2001, 51; Salonen 1995, 26), and appealing to the human interest in animal advocacy movements has continued until our time (comp. Francione 1996, 118). Translating moral questions to economic rhetoric can amplify the resonance of animal welfare claims in agricultural and policy making communities, which increases the chances of getting animal welfare proposals through in the political arena.

Animal welfare measures can also be supported in other ways on economic grounds – by referring to the “image” of organic farming. It is typical to note such things as “green-ness belong to the image of organic farming” and “grazing is a part of the image of [organic] production” (FAOF director, Peltomäki LL 7/04). “Image” refers to an impression the actor consciously gives about itself to wider audiences (see MOT Dictionary of Modern Finnish “imago”). Hence, in this discourse it is argued that there should be constant efforts in the organic sector to construct a positive image of organic farming in order to keep consumers interested in paying higher prices for organic products. High animal welfare standards ensure that consumers “continue valuing special products”, and these standards appear as a “marketing asset” or a “trump card” when competing in food markets. Concurrently, lowering organic standards can easily degrade the image of organic farming. Price premiums for organic products rely on consumer trust in the integrity of organic farming, and organic farming is highly vulnerable to any unfavourable impressions among consumers – it “gets easily stigmatised” and “it loses its reputation easily”, as an interviewed FAOF volunteer puts it.

A calf that has grown well with full milk is a market trump, which has a good image in consumers' eyes and for which consumers are ready to pay. (FAOF livestock officer, Peltomäki LL 7/01)

This discourse indicates that stringent animal welfare standards, which build a favourable image to organic livestock production, secure an access to special, animal-friendly markets that provide better price premiums for farmers. In this way animal welfare values can be commercialised – to be converted into “sellable brands”.

Consumers do not understand all the subtleties in organic standards, but they understand well the principles of organic production. – – “We have to transform organic principles to trademarks and brands. In Austrian newspapers an organic cow has a name, it is an individual”, [says Josef Eigner, the marketing manager of Austrian organic producers.] – – One should be able to transform principles to sellable brands, something that people want. (Koskimies LL 3/00)

6.3.2 Marketing value of Ladybird

In the animal welfare business discourse, high Ladybird standards are supported with similar arguments to those deployed in the case of animal welfare standards in general: stringent standards are supported with economic arguments, rather than with moral arguments. Particularly the FAOF’s leadership and Ladybird working groups argued that Ladybird can have a specific marketing potential if it includes additional requirements to governmental standards. Ladybird working groups wanted to keep Ladybird standards more stringent than governmental ones and did not support suggestions for unifying these standards (e.g. LWG proposal 23/10/2000). When Ladybird was converted into a quality label, the Leppis-brand working group proposed several additional requirements to the new Ladybird quality certification system, mainly the same requirements that had been already stated in the old Ladybird standards (Leppis-brand WG proposal 22/11/2003). Also FAOF chair recurrently noted that Ladybird standards should be kept stricter than governmental ones, so that Ladybird can function as a signifier of the “high-grade Finnish organic production” and its standards “can be clearly distinguished from the lowest requirements in the EU regulations” (Partanen LL 3/00).

Ladybird working groups and the FAOF’s leadership supported this position with arguments which were predominantly economic. It was argued that stringent Ladybird standards can secure access to high-premium “quality markets”. There are “enlightened consumers” (LWG 23/10/2000) or “critical consumers” who have “higher and wider demands” that cannot be addressed via the EU regulations alone (FAOF chair, Partanen LL 5/02). Products that meet the criteria of these consumers should be distinguishable in food markets with the Ladybird label. In this way, in a competitive market situation, high standards can be a “trump card” for Ladybird producers.

Competition is getting tougher in the market place, and Finnish organic production needs its own competition trump even in domestic markets. The Ladybird label is FAOF’s crown jewel. It should not be given away without higher requirements than in the [Council] Regulation since they are real competition trumps in quality issues. (FAOF chair, Partanen LL 8/03)

In Finland there are also critical consumers who follow, with a critical eye, to what degree different production standards can be regarded as organic. – – The founders of the Luomuleppis Co-op do not want to wait for critical consumers in Finland and around the world accepting the EU’s minimum

level as the sole definition for organic farming. – – Our intention is to develop the Ladybird label as an internationally recognised label, which assures that the [Ladybird-certified] production system meets even the demanding consumer's criteria. (The administrator of the Luomuleppis Co-op, Auranen LL 6/01)

In this discourse the diversification of organic markets was portrayed in a positive way. While in the market-oriented discourse it was argued that there is little sense to differentiate organic products with different labels as the organic markets are so tiny, in this discourse, in contrast, it was pointed out that different products can find their own market niches, and thus, they would not compete with each other in the same markets.

“I believe that in the most optimal situation the governmental inspection system, with its own standards and Sun-label, would operate side by side in collaboration with the private system, which would have its own symbol. By serving many kinds of customers and their different needs we secure better our future markets, instead of having all our eggs in one basket.” (The administrator of Luomuleppis Coop in Rämö LL 6/02)

High Ladybird standards were also supported on the grounds that they would secure an access to export markets. The governmental certification system was considered to prevent the exporting of organic products since governmental standards did not often meet the higher criteria of the private certification schemes in export countries. Similarly, the governmental certification system could not be accredited by IFOAM (formally recognised by IFOAM as an adequate certification system), which would have considerably helped to re-certify organic products in export countries, since the IFOAM-accreditation had been developed to private certification bodies and there were certain principal differences between private and governmental certification systems (MAF 2002, 25, 28, 37–39). Hence, initially, there were plans to accredit the Ladybird certification system. This implied that Ladybird standards should include certain additional requirements to Council Regulation, so that they would meet the requirements of organic standards in export countries. As organic markets were proliferating in many countries, it was argued that the access to these markets would present an important opportunity for expanding the Finnish organic sector. This was noted to be particularly important for the livestock sector. As the demand for organic livestock products had been growing in many countries due to food scandals, accessing these markets could finally boost Finnish organic livestock production, which had suffered from economic difficulties for a long time. Moreover, accessing export markets was also important from the perspective of domestic markets since it would have stabilised producer prices in Finland to the level of the world organic markets. Supporting higher Ladybird standards with export arguments was highly business-oriented: this discussion did not include any references to the possible harmful environmental impacts of increased food miles. Neither was it pointed out that the exporting of organic products is in conflict

with the idea of close producer–consumer connection that has been an important principle in the organic farming movement. Rather, new business opportunities in export countries were portrayed in highly positive terms.

Ladybird inspection and standards and their IFOAM-accreditation are needed in order to open up export markets, to gain better prices in those markets and to increase the stability in prices. In particular, there is a high demand for [organic] livestock products [in export markets] due to food scandals. – – Organic livestock production would expand in Finland if the export markets were opened and additional price were gained from there. – – The removing of export barriers gives a possibility to stabilise producer prices to the level of the world markets. (Members of the Ladybird working group in Auranen et al. LL 3/01)

The business approach to Ladybird certification in FAOF’s leadership and Ladybird working groups is perhaps well-crystallised in the tendency to describe Ladybird as a “brand”. The final Ladybird working group was labelled as a *Leppis-brand* working group, and this word-choice was reasoned in the following way,

The working group wanted to emphasise the potential of the Ladybird label in the market place and changed its name to the Leppis-brand working group. – – Although there have not been resources to market the label, it is still well-known and many users regard it as an important part of marketing their products. Ladybird is strong as a brand. Also in this sense Ladybird has potential.

By using the word brand, the working group emphasised that Ladybird has potential in markets and that it is still a relatively well-known label. Constructing Ladybird as a “brand” clearly diverges from its portrayal as a symbol of movement values as was the case in the ideological discourse. In this discourse, Ladybird symbolised the aspirations of the organic farming movement to promote good ways of farming land and to care for animals. It had a “dignified history”, crystallising the organic farming pioneers’ basic principles. In contrast, in the animal welfare business discourse, Ladybird is likened to a brand – to a product that has been made widely known through active promotion by marketing practices (see MOT Dictionary of Modern Finnish, “brändi”) – and similar to any other brand, such as BMW and Finnair. In this way, Ladybird is transferred from a movement symbol to a marketing entity, and it is described purely in business terms.

6.3.3 Combining business and ideology

In the animal welfare business discourse, there is an attempt to reconcile the tensions between ideological and market-oriented discourses. This discourse combines elements from the both discourses. As in the ideological discourse, animal welfare standards and measures are supported, but they are not supported by moral arguments; rather they gain support on economic grounds.

Klintman and Boström (2004) have identified a similar kind of discourse convergence in the Swedish organic certification organisation KRAV. By using the concepts of frame analysis, they argue that in KRAV an “eco-pragmatic metaframe”, which combines two oppositional poles – “orthodox organic ideology and pragmatism” – has become a dominant frame²¹. This convergence implies that although KRAV emphasises the importance of “naturalness” in its standards-setting processes, it also aims to “normalise” organic farming, so that organic products would be relatively inexpensive and accessible to everyone in mainstream supermarkets. In metaframing, frames are extended beyond a movement’s original goals to create alliances with wider actors. Moreover, in metaframing the actor combines oppositional poles in order to increase its control in the discursive field and to gain support for its endeavours among wider audiences. Hence, by combining organic ideology and pragmatism, KRAV has been successful in creating alliances with wider actors and in gaining support among larger publics. This reflects an aspiration to find balance in dispute situations, to transform “either or” thinking towards “both and” thinking, and to find models that combine aspects from competing positions (see Jallinoja 1991, 102–107).

We can identify similar kinds of tendencies in the animal welfare business discourse. Support from ideologically oriented organic farmers and consumers is attempted to be maintained by defending relatively high animal welfare standards and Ladybird standards. However, this position is supported with language assumed to have a stronger resonance among the majority of organic farmers and in the policy making arena – that is, with the language of money.

In its aspiration to combine economy and animal welfare, the animal welfare business discourse is highly similar to the ecological modernisation discourse that has become a central discourse in the environmental policy making arena (see Hajer 1995, 29). In the ecological modernisation discourse, economic growth and environmental protection is portrayed to be reconcilable (Andersen & Massa 2000, 337; Hajer 1995, 26, 31). For instance, environmental protection can create new markets for green products and it can stimulate innovation in manufacturing industries (Hajer 1995, 31–32). A similar approach can be identified in the animal welfare business discourse as well. Animal welfare problems are conceptualised as a question of inefficiency, and animal welfare, alongside the profitability of farming, can be increased with better planning, management and technologies at the farm. New animal welfare innovations and technologies can boost the efficiency of farming

²¹ In frame analysis the “frame” refers to interpretative schemas or “cultural filters” that guide the perception and the labelling of things or events. In their classic article on frame analysis in the social movement literature, sociologist David A. Snow and colleagues (1986, 464) define the term, quoting Goffman (1975, 21), as a “schemata of interpretation” that helps people “to locate, perceive, identify, and label” occurrences around them. These frames make things meaningful to people, organising their experiences and guiding action.

enterprises and bring new market opportunities for agribusiness firms. In both discourses the language of business is the dominant way of speaking. Both environmental and animal welfare issues can be made calculable, to be described in monetary terms and to be included in cost-benefit-analyses, which has much resonance in the policy making arena (ibid. 26, 31–32). Environmental and animal protection are not discussed in moral terms, but the focus is upon their economic benefits (ibid.). Hajer (ibid. 26) has crystallised this position well, “although some supporters may individually start with moral premises, ecological modernization basically follows utilitarian logic: at the core of ecological modernization is the idea that pollution prevention pays.”

A certain kind of ecological modernisation tone is particularly evident in the discourse of animal welfare scientists. Ecological modernisation discourse relies strongly on science and technology (Hajer 1995, 27, 32–33, 35). It does not share certain anti-modernist ideas in environmental movements, but it is, in Hajer’s (ibid. 32) words, “a modernist and technocratic approach to the environment that suggests that there is a techno-institutional fix for the present problems”. It includes a trust in modern progress and a belief that modern institutions, technologies, policy instruments and science are capable of solving environmental problems (ibid. 33). Similar kinds of ideas can be found in the discourse of animal welfare scientists. There are no aspirations to go back to pre-modern farming systems, but rather there is a trust in modern expert systems to solve animal welfare problems in livestock production. By modernising animal farming systems – by utilising scientific knowledge, by bringing in improved animal welfare technologies and by developing animal welfare monitoring systems – the quality of life of animals can be improved in livestock production. Animal welfare is transformed into something that can be measured with numerical indicators (e.g. fertility, growth and mortality rates, behavioural responses, physiological changes), and these again can be included in economic cost-benefit analyses.

6.4 Growing business orientation in FAOF

In the previous sections I have described how FAOF’s discourses on farm animal welfare include both the ideological and market-oriented position, which reflects well the business–ideology tensions in the organic farming field in general. I have also noted that there has been a discourse – the animal welfare business discourse – that tries to combine these discourses, seeking a balance between them. It seems that the ideological orientation has declined in FAOF’s discourses while the business orientation has increased its foothold. The growing business orientation in FAOF can be seen in a number of ways. Firstly, the market oriented position turned out to be the most influential

one in the discussion concerning Ladybird standards as the old Ladybird certification system with its additional requirements ceased to exist. Secondly, there has been a growing usage of business-based argumentation in FAOF, reflecting the approach that money, rather than morality, speaks to FAOF's membership. Finally, FAOF has been increasingly constructed as an interest group for organic farmers rather than an ideological organisation that promotes certain organic farming ideals.

The growing business orientation in FAOF reflects the rising power of new, more market oriented farmers within the organisation. It can be reasonably expected that as the number of market-oriented organic farmers has been increasing (see section 3.5.1), there has been also a growing number of business-oriented farmers among the members and activists of FAOF's member societies. In FAOF's leadership, it is recurrently noted that FAOF wants to be an organisation for all Finnish organic farmers. It is assumed that the growing amount of new organic farmers are more business-oriented than pioneering farmers and that they expect FAOF to put resources to lobbying activities in order to secure their economic interests.

In earlier times there was very much ideological dedication here, and this was expected from FAOF. But now our aim is to be an organisation for all organic farmers. And I believe that increasingly farmers are making decisions, no longer based on ideology, but rather, based on a pocket calculator. *And my policy line and also the board's policy line is that we are going increasingly toward business-organics.* (Iv, FAOF representative)

The growing business orientation in FAOF has been reflected firstly in the standards-setting activities in the organisation. In the case of Ladybird standards, the market-oriented position ended up as being the most influential since the old Ladybird certification system was abolished, against the wishes of the ideological position that wanted to maintain the old Ladybird certification system. Moreover, the renewed standards of the new Ladybird quality label did not include almost any additional requirements to the governmental standards. Although the Leppis-brand working group proposed additional requirements to the new Ladybird standard, this proposition did not go through in the AGM, and additional requirements ended up appearing only as voluntary requirements or recommendations in the new Ladybird certification system. Similarly, when FAOF has participated in the development of governmental standards, it has not actively promoted more stringent standards, but rather it has aimed to make rules easier for farmers. For instance, FAOF has been promoting more flexibility in rules concerning the usage of conventional feedstuffs in organic livestock production (e.g. PR 28/6/2005). As FAOF representative states,

But on the other hand we, and in particular farmers, have been quite sensitive to take any additional requirements there [to organic standards]. – – Farmers have learned that if one transition period ends – – they feel that their area of operation has been narrowed down and that requirements have gotten more stringent. So a clear interest promotion issue has appeared there. – – I do see that now after this [the establishment of livestock production standards], it is very difficult to get issues that improve animal welfare there. I believe that farmers do not necessarily want them, but on the contrary we are seeking points that could ease their situation a little bit. (Iv, FAOF representative)

Secondly, the growing business orientation in FAOF has also been reflected in the usage of market-based argumentation in FAOF's texts. It is important to point out that it has not been possible to make any kind of quantitative analysis concerning the relationship between discourses. Pieces of the discourses have been widely dispersed in the data, and it would have been rather pointless to calculate the occurrences of different categories, expressions, word-usage and so on. Consequently, it is not possible to say whether the business-oriented discourse would have increased in quantitative terms as compared to the ideological discourse. Thus, the interpretation of the importance of the business-oriented discourse is based on the reviewing what kind of audiences these discourses appear to construct.

As I have noted, in the animal welfare business discourse, high animal welfare standards and Ladybird standards are supported with economic arguments. It is, of course, not possible to review whether constructing the win-win-situation between animal welfare and economics in the animal welfare business discourse reflects an author's genuine belief. However, it is possible to say that this kind of argumentation construes the audience in a business-oriented way – it appears that money, rather than morality, speaks to this audience. New, more market oriented farmers have a background in professional, conventional farming (as opposed to “back-to-the-landers”). They tend to have rather large farms, which implies that converting to organic means higher economic risks for them. It appears that there is a need to speak to these farmers in a conventional way by referring to the economics and profitability of farming, rather than to morality or ideology. These farmers do not appear to have any kind of “movement identity” (I discuss this in more detail shortly), and they probably have familiarised themselves with organic farming through the conventional agricultural policy sector – by participating in formal training courses and by reading about official organic standards and subsidy requirements. Hence, for these farmers, any kind of ideological, emotional or moral argumentation can appear as alienating, while familiar references to economics, profitability and agricultural science appear to have more resonance among them.

Sociologist Andrew Smart (2004) has made similar findings in the case of UK's Vegetarian Society. As vegetarianism has expanded, an increasing number of vegetarians have become disengaged from

the moral foundations of vegetarianism, emphasising health- and taste-based reasons rather than ideological reasons for going vegetarian. This change in the pool of vegetarians has been reflected also in the Vegetarian Society's argumentation. The Society has started increasingly to favour scientific arguments, referring to the health benefits of the vegetarian diet, while the usage of moral or emotive arguments has declined in its publications – vegetarianism has been increasingly portrayed as “as a rational, rather than a moral, choice” (p. 89).

Finally, the growing business orientation in FAOF has also entailed that FAOF has been increasingly profiled as an interest group. The weakening of FAOF's own certification activities, or their near cessation, has implied major changes in FAOF's role. Previously standards-setting, inspection and certification were FAOF's main activities, and after the government got involved in this arena, FAOF had to find a new role in the organic farming field (e.g. iv, FAOF representative and volunteer). Transferring inspection activities from FAOF to the government involved a decline in FAOF's governmental funding since the government had funded FAOF's inspection work from the very beginning (FAOF's financial statements). Moreover, when the Ladybird certification started to decline, the revenue from food manufacturers that had used the label began to diminish (Tuomola LL 7/99 and LL 8/99). Hence, FAOF was forced to seek new funding sources. Firstly, FAOF turned to the government, but this time it sought funding for its advisory activities (iv, FAOF representative). Hence FAOF profiled itself as a “specialist advisory organisation” that complements ProAgria's work (iv, FAOF representative; FAOF's mission statement 2005). Secondly, however, FAOF profiled itself as an “expert lobbying organisation” (FAOF's mission statement 2005), turning to organic farmers for financial support. FAOF's membership fees were raised in 2000 based on arguments that more financing from organic farmers was needed in order to promote their interests and that interest lobbying cannot be done with governmental money (e.g. Partanen LL 8/00, 6/04; Rantanen LL 8/00). For instance, the then FAOF chair wrote,

It is pointless to guess any more who the primary organisation promoting an organic farmer's interests is. It is definitely FAOF. No one else in this country has such a detailed expertise in problems related to organic production and their solutions. – – Because of this, it is reasonable that every organic farmer contributes to covering the costs of the interest promotion that is specialised in their area. – – Join FAOF's member societies now. The amount of money you invest in it beats any investment in the stock exchange. – – Membership payments are the sole way to finance FAOF's action so that FAOF can use an independent voice in Finland's agricultural policy. (FAOF chair, Partanen LL 1/03)

As emphasised in section 6.2.3, in the market-oriented discourse, one of the FAOF's most important tasks was to promote organic farmers' interests, rather than to develop its own standard. It seems

that market-oriented farmers have increasingly demanded that FAOF focus on lobbying activities. Governmental organic farming subsidies and regulations have become increasingly important to organic farmers, and thus FAOF has been required to make efforts to secure the specific interests of farmers when these schemes are being prepared.

What farmers currently expect from us is related to subsidy policies as there are now big changes going on in relation to the programme period [of agricultural support policy]. The single farm support system will be introduced in 2006, and then there is the LFA [agricultural subsidy in Less Favoured Areas], and environmental subsidy programmes are being reformed. [It is expected] that there would be a representative who would monitor that an organic farmer would be equally treated there, or at least ensure that no surprises would appear. In these issues farmers are expecting our contribution.

(Iv, FAOF representative)

The decline in FAOF's own standards-setting has had important implications for the ideological orientation of the organisation. Standards-setting requires quite extensive discussion about the ideological principles of organic farming – it includes negotiations about which kinds of animal farming practices can be defined as “organic”, to follow organic ideas. Hence, as the in-house development work of organic standards has become marginal in FAOF, the ideological discussion it entails has also diminished. Moreover, FAOF needs no longer have a similar level of communication with consumers to that which was required when FAOF maintained its own organic standards. Hence, it has become increasingly an organisation for *farmers*, rather than an organisation for the whole organic chain (or movement). Instead of continuing to develop the ideas, ideals and principles of organic farming, FAOF has increasingly begun to respond to initiatives coming from other actors, particularly from the EU and governmental actors.

Then this FAOF's role... in my opinion it should include a certain kind of developmental perspective. It should not be as it is nowadays that the energy of FAOF's employees goes towards such issues as applying for extensions to exceptional permits or commenting on subsidy requirements. This means that FAOF is not creating its own positions and putting them forward for others to think about, but rather it is just commenting on something that some one else has already done. – – In local societies, enquiring consumers' opinions has deteriorated as there is no longer any need to ask consumers' positions concerning as to *what kind of production organic production should be*. (Iv, FAOF volunteer)

FAOF appears to have had a dual character similar to that of trade unions. Trade unions can be both social movements, promoting certain societal ideas and challenging the established social order, and act as economic forces (“market-unionism”), negotiating practical issues concerning work conditions and salaries (Bell 1960, 211–226). In other words, FAOF has been promoting certain organic ideals as a social movement organisation, but it has also worked as an interest group for organic farmers. Arguably FAOF's members include both those organic farmers who identify

themselves as a part of the organic movement and those organic farmers who regard organic farming more as an entrepreneurial or professional activity rather than as a social movement. To be a part of the organic movement means sharing a collective identity as a member of the movement – a sense of belongingness to the movement, or in sociologists Donatella della Porta's and Mario Diani's (2006, 21) words, "a sense of common purpose and shared commitment to a cause". It also means being devoted to the ideas and principles of organic farming and having a will to challenge the mainstream food production system in order to change it to become more environmentally and ethically sustainable (comp. Boström & Klintman 2006, 167; della Porta & Diani 2006, 20–22)²². However, only a part of FAOF's members are involved in the movement activity in this way, seeking a forum in which moral passions, sensibilities and views can be articulated publicly and collectively (comp. Jasper 1997, 5). FAOF also has members who do not identify themselves as a part of the "movement", who may not be highly critical toward conventional farming and who may not share the moral visions of "good farming" with movement actors, but may be interested in organic farming more for economic or professional reasons. These farmers are engaged with, in Boström's and Klintman's (2006, 167) words, the "organic advocacy network", rather than with "organic movement"; they are involved in the field without being ideologically committed to it.

It seems that movement-oriented farmers have become increasingly marginalised in the organisation. These farmers portray negatively how the ideological orientation of FAOF has "crumbled" and how the ideological position is no longer put forward in FAOF's decision-making bodies. The near cessation of Ladybird certification was a particularly significant loss for these members. Ladybird was a central symbol of movement values, and developing the Ladybird standard was a core activity for pioneering members. The discontinuation of the old Ladybird certification and its distinct standards implied the reduced importance of movement members within the organisation.

SK: What do you think about this ideological orientation in FAOF, that it...

Interviewee: Well it has crumbled down, I say it directly, it was a big disappointment to me. -- The ideological commitment and going back to the roots, which we have tried to trumpet. -- it has been forgotten rather much, and I do not know if it is a consequence of farming folks not wanting it... I

²² The concept of social movement has been defined in diverse ways. Here I follow della Porta's and Diani's (2006, 20–22) definition, according to which in social movements people "are involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents", "share a distinct collective identity" and "are linked by dense informal network" (this means that social movements include a diversity of informal networks and cannot be reduced to a single organisation). Sociologist Sydney Tarrow (1998) emphasises similar aspects in his definition of social movements: social movements include collective challenges, common purposes, solidarities and collective identities, as well as sustained contention with elites and opponents.

mean there are always the type of people who like to discuss things and the ideology [is important to them], and then others who do not want to, who think it is nonsense. (Iv, FAOF volunteer)

In this way, FAOF seems to have followed similar paths to those identified in certification agencies in other countries. As I noted in section 3.5.3, large-scale market-oriented farmers or large retailers and manufacturers have increased their power in these organisations, while movement-oriented farmers have become more and more marginalised. Gradually the original movement actors who were key players in developing organic standards have become displaced by more business-oriented players. As a consequence, in some countries movement farmers have been leaving the formal organic sector and become involved with new kinds of alternative schemes in order to maintain their movement ideals. (Boström & Klintman 2006, 170–171; Campbell & Liepins 2001; Guthman 2004a, 118–120, 124–125, 134.) In FAOF's case, I could not identify any tendencies for movement actors to leave FAOF, but what appears evident is that business-orientation has increased in the organisation.

7 Conclusion

In this research I have taken FAOF as a case in order to study how the meanings of animal welfare are constructed in organic livestock farming and what the growing governmental and business involvement in the organic sector has implied to this meaning construction. More specifically, I have been interested in how organic livestock producers' orientations to animal welfare are represented in FAOF's texts. Likewise, I have examined which kinds of positions FAOF's actors take on animal welfare standards as well as how they support and justify these positions. Furthermore, I have studied how the growing business orientation and governmental involvement in the organic sector has been reflected in FAOF's discourses on farm animal welfare and organic standards. With this kind of research approach I have aimed to create more understanding concerning the meanings of animal welfare in the organic sector, as thus far this issue has been subjected to relatively little empirical social research, despite the heightened societal importance of organic farming as an "animal friendly" alternative. Moreover, I have aimed to participate in the discussion concerning the implications of the growing business and governmental involvement to the organic farming sector. I have continued a line of research which investigates political discourses relating to the constructing of the meaning of organic farming in the standards-setting field. Research on standards discourses has tended to focus on organic crop production, and thus, I have aimed to create a better

understanding as to how the growing business and governmental involvement in the standards-setting arena may have reflected upon the discussion about animal welfare standards.

FAOF appeared to provide a fruitful context to analyse these issues. Firstly, it offered an interesting opportunity to explore how the growing governmental involvement in the setting of organic standards may have reflected in discourses on animal welfare. Previously FAOF had maintained organic standards and had carried out the inspection and certification of organic farming, but its activities in these fields weakened when the governmental standards and inspection system was established. This raised questions about how FAOF had responded to these changes, how it had re-defined its role in the organic field and how this was reflected in the discussion concerning animal welfare standards within the organisation. Secondly, FAOF also appeared to provide an interesting context to analyse the tensions between market-oriented and movement-oriented farmers as it has needed to respond to the growing proportion of more business-oriented farmers in the sector.

I have identified three main discourses concerning the meanings of animal welfare in organic farming in FAOF's texts: an ideological discourse, a market-oriented discourse and an animal welfare business discourse. In the ideological discourse, morality is the central reference point. Motives for converting to organic livestock production and for continuing to practise organic farming include health and animal welfare reasons. Animal welfare has a value in itself, and stringent animal welfare standards are supported on moral grounds. Similarly, there are aspirations to continue to maintain FAOF's own Ladybird certification system as well as to keep Ladybird standards more stringent than governmental ones in order to better achieve certain organic farming ideals. Ladybird is considered as a central symbol of the movement aims concerning good ways of producing food, cultivating land and looking after animals. Main discourse subjects include organic farmers and advisors, and to a lesser extent, animal welfare scientists. In the market-oriented discourse, economics is the core reference point in argumentation while references to morality or organic ideology carry a lesser weight. In the construction of the "business oriented farmer", economic reasons appear to be the prime reasons for converting to organic farming and for continuing to practise organic farming. Similarly, organic farming is represented as a "reasonable" farming alternative as well as a rational and profitable choice, and a certain distance is taken to any kind of "organic fundamentalism" in order to increase the legitimacy of organic farming. Stringent animal welfare standards and Ladybird standards are portrayed in negative terms: it is argued that costs caused by more stringent standards would not be compensated with better price premiums. This

discourse represents a “voice from the field”: its main discourse subjects include organic farmers and the active members of the regional organic farming societies.

In the animal welfare business discourse, the tensions between ideological discourse and market-oriented discourse are attempted to be reconciled. This discourse combines elements from the both discourses. As in the ideological discourse, high animal welfare standards are supported, not with the moral arguments deployed in the ideological discourse, but with the economic arguments used in the market-oriented discourse. Stringent animal welfare standards and the promotion of animal welfare can bring economic benefits to the farmer through the increased productivity of animals or through diminished costs of animal management. Economic benefits of animal welfare are supported with highly scientific arguments. High animal welfare standards also secure an access to “animal friendly” markets, with better prime premiums, and in this way, animal welfare can be commodified and commercialised. Similarly, distinguishing Ladybird from the governmental label as a sign of “higher” organic standards is supported on the grounds that higher standards bring additional value to organic products, and in this way, improved prime premiums. Main discourse subjects here are scientists (mainly animal welfare scientists) and the FAOF’s leadership.

It seems that the ideological argumentation has become weaker in FAOF’s discourses while the market-based argumentation has become increasingly stronger. The shift in FAOF’s discourses reflects the growing power of the new, more market oriented farmers within the organisation. This could be seen, firstly, in the standard-setting activities: after an extensive debate in FAOF, the old Ladybird certification system was finally abolished, and the renewed standards of the new Ladybird quality label did not include any additional requirements to the governmental standards, despite so being proposed by the Ladybird working group. Similarly, when FAOF has participated in the development of governmental standards, it has not been actively promoting more stringent standards, but rather more flexibility in rules to ease the organic farmers’ economic situation. Secondly, the growing business orientation in FAOF has also been reflected in the use of market-based argumentation in FAOF’s texts. This kind of argumentation indicates that the audience is constructed as business-oriented: it appears that there is a need to speak in a conventional way to new farmers by referring to economics and to the profitability of farming, rather than to morality or ideology. Finally, the growing business orientation in FAOF has meant that FAOF has been increasingly profiled as an interest group for organic farmers rather than an ideological organisation that promotes certain organic farming ideals.

It is possible to form two conclusions from this. Firstly, regarding the question of the tensions between business-oriented and ideologically oriented farmers, business discourse is a certain kind of “frame extension”, in which an organisation’s way of speaking is extended beyond the movement’s original goals in order to create alliances and to gain support in wider audiences, like in the case of the Swedish organic certification agency KRAV (see section 6.3.3) (comp. Klintman & Boström 2004). References to rationality, science and economics help to create mainstream acceptability for organic farming: organic farming is not associated with religiosity, fundamentalism, idealism or tinkering, but it appears as a “respectable alternative”, a credible, acceptable and legitimate form of production that “ordinary farmers” can adopt and “ordinary consumers” can support. Emotive or moral language, it appears, can distance mainstream farmers and consumers further from organic farming. References to economics, productivity, efficiency and profits can appeal to FAOF’s market-oriented farmer members who have a background in professional, conventional farming and it can also appeal to those conventional farmers which FAOF’s actors attempt to recruit into the organic sector.

At the same time, however, by using the animal welfare business discourse, FAOF can also keep hold of the ideological farmers, so that they are not fully marginalised in the organisation. Ideologically oriented organic farmers’ support can be maintained by defending relatively high animal welfare standards and Ladybird standards, although this position is not supported with moral arguments, but with economic arguments that have stronger resonance among business oriented farmers. In this way, the two oppositional poles – movement and business orientations – are attempted to be reconciled within the organisation.

Secondly, regarding the question of the growing governmental involvement in the organic sector, it seems that when FAOF has increasingly entered into the policy making sector, its ideological argumentation has somewhat needed to fade away. When the governmental organic standards and the certification system were created, discussion on standards was transferred from an arena occupied by the movement (organic farmers and consumers creating together the rules of organic farming) to an arena occupied the government. According to sociologist Riitta Jallinoja (2006, 221–237), it seems that in order for the movement to achieve certain policy changes, it must translate ideology to the language of policy. This language is mainly an economic language, focusing on weighing costs and benefits of different policy measures. When ideology is translated into certain political questions, it tends to fade away from discussions, and it is replaced with a language of money. It seems that politicians and civil servants do not engage in ideological discussion, but

instead prefer to talk in economic terms, referring for instance to cost savings, budgetary consequences and monetary allocation. Also communication researcher Anu Kantola (2006, 292–295) has well documented that a certain kind of “economistic” approach in political governance has increased: policy makers’ discourse is increasingly permeated with references to financial rationality, economic necessities and budgetary constraints. Similarly, according to political scientist Kyösti Pekonen (1995, 39–40, 55–56), politics has moved closer to public administration, so that “politics” is disappearing from the political arena, being replaced by the technical and rationalistic argumentation typical of public administration. The political arena is permeated increasingly with a certain kind of “necessity language”: policy making has to acknowledge certain economic necessities, and due to these economic constraints there are no viable political alternatives to the chosen measure. This implies that issues are made apolitical: as there are no alternatives, there cannot be controversies over them and hence no space for political discussions. Politics becomes increasingly understood as “policy”: it turns into a set of rationally and technically chosen measures to tackle certain issues. Thus, it becomes quite clear that in this situation there is little space for moral or emotional argumentation in political discussions, while references to economic necessities and monetary constraints have a strong foothold. Dobbin (2001) has also noted that in social movements, emotions and passions have increasingly become replaced by rational and calculative interest-driven action – there has been an “ongoing substitution of interest for passion” (p. 75).

As FAOF has increasingly started discussing standards in the governmental arena, rather than developing its own private standards, the language of standards has needed to be translated into the language of civil servants and politicians – i.e. to the language of economics, money and cost-benefit-analysis. Animal welfare measures are not promoted in moral terms, but as in the ecological modernisation discourse, they are promoted by reference to the economic benefits of animal welfare, which is an appealing way to frame the issue in the policy making arena (comp. Hajer 1995, 26, 31–32). Concurrently, as FAOF has almost ceased to develop its own standards, there has been a decline in the need to discuss the ideological principles of organic farming within the organisation.

It also seems that movements can get politicians and civil servants involved when the ideology is translated into rational *interest-lobbying politics*. For instance, in Jallinoja’s (2006, 223) study concerning the discussion on the home care subsidy, housewives were construed as an interest group who deserve equal support from the state with working parents. Similarly, in FAOF, organic farmers have been increasingly constructed as an interest group and FAOF as an organisation that promotes the economic interests of this group. As I have noted, while FAOF has had an interesting character

of being both a social movement organisation and an interest group, a dual role shared by trade unions (see Bell 1960, 211–226), its social movement emphasis has declined. In this way, FAOF has translated organic farming issues to the conventional politics of interest-lobbying, which appears to be an appealing way of framing things in the field of policy making.

The influx of more business-oriented farmers to the organic farming sector and the switching of standards negotiations to the governmental arena have meant that market-orientation has increased in FAOF's animal welfare discourses and that moral and ideological argumentation has weakened in the organisation. In this way, FAOF seems to have followed similar paths to those identified in certification agencies in other countries. Market-oriented farmers have become increasingly powerful agents in these organisations, while the importance of ideologically oriented farmers has declined in the standards-setting negotiations. Similarly, the increasing governmental involvement in the standards-setting arena has implied that the power of movement actors in defining the meaning of organic farming in this arena has declined. (See Boström & Klintman 2006; Campbell & Liepins 2001; Guthman 2004a.)

In the beginning of this study I discussed how organic farming has arisen as an alternative model for treating animals to conventional livestock production. Organic farming has appeared to offer a resolution to moral problems associated with the mainstream, increasingly industrialised livestock production system, bringing animal farming “back to husbandry from industry”, bringing “nature” back to farming and allowing animals to be again, indeed, “animals”. However, the increasing importance of business orientation in animal welfare discourses in the organic sector raises the question to which extent organic farming can work as a resolution to growing concerns for farm animal welfare. The analysis of FAOF's discussions indicates that the discourses in the production side of the organic sector draw extensively from economics, rather than from “nature” and “naturalness”, which have been important reference points in consumer discourses and in the original organic movement. The business concept of animal welfare tends to construct animals as “commodities”, the productive capacity of which is measured in detail with different economic indicators, rather than as “natural beings”, the welfare of which appears as inherently important.

The divide between producer (“business”) and consumer (“naturalness”) discourses on animal welfare is heightened by the fact that FAOF has increasingly changed from an organisation for the organic movement (including farmers and consumers devoted to the principles of organic farming) into an interest-lobby organisation for farmers. As an organisation for farmers who need to make living

from organic livestock production and who tend to operate with small profit-margins due to low price-premiums and organic subsidies, FAOF tends to defend the economic interests of organic farmers against making animal welfare standards more stringent. In this way, FAOF does not appear as a forceful agent to promote the adoption of certain animal welfare values and ideals in the food sector: it is not developing its own standard that would express the ideals to which organic livestock farming should strive for and that would become constantly stringent when the organic sector develops. Neither FAOF is bringing new proposals to improve animal welfare standards, but rather it has been demanding rules that would ease the situation of organic livestock producers. However, it cannot be concluded that the so called “conventionalisation” tendencies would have fully eaten the organisation and prevented it to promote the adoption of alternative livestock farming methods: although FAOF probably cannot promote animal welfare through organic standards, it can still advance alternative livestock production methods by working to improve the economic situation and working conditions of organic livestock producers and by pressurising the government to increase support for organic livestock farmers. In this way, FAOF still can work for promoting animal welfare in the agricultural sector, although arguably not in the terms the most idealist organic farmers, consumers and movement actors would like to.

In this research I have been making a case that there is a need to note the contested character of the meaning of organic farming and animal welfare and to investigate how their cultural interpretations are produced, reproduced and contested in the organic sector. This has become increasingly important as the societal significance of organic livestock production has grown and as tensions between business, governmental and movement actors in the sector have heightened the contested character of this meaning construction. In this research, I was able to touch upon only a fraction of the multiplicity of meanings in organic livestock production, focusing on political discourses in the producers’ side. There would be a need to analyse the construction of the meaning of organic livestock production also in other settings, such as in media and in consumer discourses. Moreover, while in this research I could focus only on the question of animal welfare, the wider question of the moral standing of animals in the organic sector would still require more investigation.

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Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products with regard to organic production, labelling and control.

Appendix 1. List of analytic codes

Ideological discourse

Reasons for converting to organic farming:

- human health
- animal health
- animal welfare
- other ideological

Self-identity:

- distinction to conventional farming
- distinction to business-oriented farming
- labelling terms
- other

Production level

Long-term productivity

Animal welfare standards / measures:

- improving standards
- natural welfare
- other

Ladybird:

- Stricter standards
- Farmer / consumer power
- Symbol
- Other ideological

Other ideological discourse

Market-oriented discourse

Economic reasons for converting to organic farming

Self-identity:

- self-definition
- professionalism
- religion
- reasonable farmer

High productivity

Animal welfare standards / measures:

- no stricter standards
- costs of animal welfare measures
- diminishing productivity of animals
- labour costs
- step-by-step

Ladybird:

- no stricter standards
- interest group focus
- no added value
- clear markets
- losing members / marginalisation
- market-orientation other

Other market oriented discourse

Animal welfare business discourse

Win-win situation between welfare and economy:

- diminishing costs
- increasing productivity / fertility
- product quality
- improved health
- work saving
- market value
- image

Ladybird:

- trump card
- export argument
- “value” markets
- other animal welfare business approach

Other animal welfare business discourse

FAOF's role

Interest group

Ideological organisation

FAOF's role other

Appendix 2. List of documentary data

General

Annual reports 1985–2005, except 1990, 1991 and 1999 (18 documents)

Draft of the Annual Report 1999 (1 document)

Action plans 1986–2006, except 1999 and 2000 (19 documents)

Financial statements 1985–2005, except 1988 and 2003 (19 documents)

Committee minutes 1985–2005 (190 documents)

FAOF's constitutions (accepted in 16/6/1985, revised in 19/3/1989, 30/11/1989, 26/3/1990, 29/4/1993, 18/11/1995, 16/11/1996, 15/11/1997, 17/11/2001, 22/11/2003) (10 documents)

Spring and autumn meeting minutes 1985–2005, except 1994 autumn meeting minutes (41 documents)

Luumulehti media cards 2005 and 2006 (2 documents)

Organic Livestock Standards Working Group (SWG) in 1996–2000: minutes, agendas and aside material (36 documents)

Reports from IFOAM EU Group meetings in 1996–2005 (10 documents)

Comments from regional member societies concerning organic livestock production standards (1995–2000) (11 documents)

Comments from other actors concerning organic livestock production standards (1995–2000) (11 documents)

FAOF's statements

Suomen luonnonmukaisen viljelyn yhdistysten liitto ry: Esitys Maa- ja metsätalousministeriölle (18/5/1989).

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Lausunto: Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö: Asetus luonnonmukaisesti tuotetuista rehuaineista ja asetus luonnonmukaiseen tuotantoon tarkoitetuista rehuseoksista (7/8/2000).

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Luonnonmukaisen kotieläintuotannon ohjeet, 16/11/1996.

Luonnonmukaisen kotieläintuotannon ohjeet, uusittu 19/4/1997.

Luonnonmukaisen kotieläintuotannon ohjeet, uusittu 15/11/1997.

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Ladybird working groups

Leppäkerttutyöryhmän esitys Luomuliiton hallitukselle (23/10/2000).

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Kokouskutsu: Leppäkerttutyöryhmän kokous 5/02 (28/10/2002).

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Tiedote: Leppäkerttumerkin käyttö jatkuu (29/4/2003).

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Pöytäkirja: Leppisbrändityöryhmän kokous 5/2003 (25/9/2003).

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Saimaan Luomu: Luomu-Liitto (17/6/2002).

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Saimaan Luomu ry: Luomuliitolle (1/4/2003) – julkaistu myös Luomulehdessä 22:3, 33.

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Appendix 3. Luomulehti articles

Luomulehti articles in a chronological order

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